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U. S. LITHOGRAPH CO., CHICAGO, ILL.



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Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Fred D. Pfening, III Associate Editors

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The Jones Bros. & Wilson Circus toured only one season, 1914. The illustration on our cover is the front cover of the courier booklet published by the circus.

The illustration on the back cover is from the back cover of the courier. This design was used in connection with the wild animal trainer features in this issue. The original colors of the illustrations are the same as shown here. Original from the Pfening Collection.

Last Issue Freddie Daw Book Special should have read - A History Of The Circus In America by Chindahl \$6.00-Copy now out of print.

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33134

NEW MEMBERS

Charles F. Hill P. O. Box 4441 Carmel, California — 93921	2054
Eureka D. Arnold 24 Price Avenue Erlanger, Kentucky — 41018	2055
Damon Swanson 4030 Baker Road Hopkins, Minnesota — 55343	2056
Anthony Chayka 27 Harding Avenue Hicksville, New York — 11801	2057
Harold Andrew Mudry P. O. Box 1061 Gibson, Florida — 33534	2058
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Kenneth A. Cunningham P. O. Box 86 Hopkinsville, Kentucky — 42240	2060
Rev. Paul John Rich 234 Central Street East Bridgewater, Mass. — 02333	2061

James H. Horner Route #1, Pineview Lakes Chester, South Carolina — 29706	2062
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Richard C. Bennett 104 Boxwood Lane Minoa, New York — 13116	899
Rene J. Bouchard, Jr. Bishop's Road Kingston, Mass. — 02364	962

CONVENTION PLANS PROGRESS Baraboo in 72

August 4 and 5, 1972 will be packed with a program of special historical papers presented by members, the viewing of motion pictures from the collection of the Circus World Museum and time for personal research. In addition Bob Parkinson will display the vast collection of lithographs in the library of the research center.

The activities will begin on the morning of Friday August 4, so you should arrive on Thursday the 3rd. There will be a farmer's gathering in the Baraboo area at the same time so it is suggested that you write for motel reservations as soon as possible.

This will be a new kind of meeting for the CHS, one at which CIRCUS HISTORY will be the central theme. It will be most worthwhile to attend.

Send In Dues

This is the last issue of the Bandwagon you will receive if you have not sent in your CHS dues or subscription payment. If you have not as yet mailed your \$8.00 to Secretary-Treasurer Julian Jimenez do so today so you will not miss a single issue of the Bandwagon.

RARE TREAT

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FOX TO BARNUM CITY



Charles Philip "Chappie" Fox, director of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin, has resigned that post effective the end of October 1972. On November 1, 1972 he will become director of Circus Town, in the Living World of Ringling Bros. - Barnum & Bailey, a mammoth all-live super-attraction to be located near Orlando, Florida, scheduled to open in 1975.

Fox's duties will include circus research and special events such as a circus parade and circus train loading and unloading demonstrations.

Although it was John M. Kelley who had the original idea to create a circus museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin, it was Chappie Fox who fathered it to completion and then on to greater heights, after being named its full time director in 1959.

It was Fox who rounded up 95% of all of the remaining circus baggage and parade wagons left in the United States, it was he who rounded up the sponsors that made the wagons available and then moved them to Baraboo. He has supervised the rebuilding and painting of the wagons, making sure all the while that they were true to their original design and decoration.

In 1962 Fox conceived the idea of taking the majestic parade wagons to Milwaukee for a real old time horse drawn circus parade. First the wagons went by truck, but he later placed the whole procession on a circus flat car train. His dream will come true on the parade's tenth year in 1972 when a forty horse hitch will pull a resplendent bandwagon in Milwaukee.

Fox is a past Vice-President of the Circus Historical Society and was one of three members who boosted the organization on its way to new heights in 1957. He is a director of the Madison County Zoological Society and a past president of the Milwaukee Zoo. Fox is the author of *Circus Trains*, *Circus Parades*, *A Ticket to the Circus*, *Performing Horses*, and co-author of *CIRCUS*. He has also published 13 children's books and his photographs have been used in *National Geographic*, *Life* and *Sports Illustrated*.

A new director will be selected by the Circus World Museum's directors and will be announced at a later date.

Advise Address Changes

The increase in mail rate means it will cost the CHS around 25¢ to remail your copy of the Bandwagon to a new address. Please forward your new address at once to the Editor so there will not be an extra charge to the CHS and a delay to you in receiving your copy.

OTTO GRIEBLING DIES

The circus lost one of its greatest performers when Otto Griebing, America's best known clown died in New York City on April 19, 1972, a few days before his 76th birthday. He had been appearing with the Ringling-Barnum Circus in Madison Square Garden, having been with that circus for over 20 years.

Today's circus fan will first remember Griebing on Hagenback-Wallace, in the early 1930s and Cole Bros. during its entire existence before joining the Greatest Show On Earth.

He appeared in a riding act for the first



10 of his 60 years in a circus ring. As the years passed he perfected the sad face and would often take the arm of a lady circus goer during the come-in and walk unnoticed with the lady for 20 or more feet to the delight of the audience.

Otto Griebing was a great one, one of a very few.

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MASTERS OF THE STEEL ARENA

By FRED D. PFENING, JR.

There have been wild animal trainers (or tamers) just about as long as there have been circuses in the United States.

This article started out as a brief text to accompany a selection of lithographs depicting wild animal trainers, as a part of our series of litho reproductions. As we began researching the subject it was quickly apparent that far more circuses have presented wild animal acts than one might think. A check of programs and newspaper advertisements opened up untold circuses and individuals, far more than the author imagined. This text, however, is not intended to be by any means a complete catalog of all the cat men and women who have appeared in the big tops of America.

Going back 137 years we find that the Macomber Welch & Co. advised that a man, unidentified, would enter an arena of lions. The year was 1835 and it may not have been this first such appearance. An 1855 newspaper ad for the Seth B. Howes circus advised that the celebrated tamer of wild beasts Mr. Parker, will enter the den of lions. In 1863 Prof. Sears presented an act consisting of lions, tigers, leopards, panthers and cougars with the Mabie Grand Menagerie. The Van Amburgh & Co., in 1864, featured Prof. Langworthy's lions and tigers. Col. George W. Hall, who later operated his own circus in the 1890s, worked six lions on the J. M. French Great Oriental Circus

in 1869. The following year the French show advertised Herr Paul Schoff and six lions, this 1870 act may have been brother Hall under another name. Hemmings, Cooper and Whitby advertised a Felix McDonald and a cat act in 1870 also. So it is clearly evident that the circuses of the middle 1800s did indeed feature wild animal presentations.

However all of these presentations, including that of Isaac A. Van Amburgh, the "lion king", who appeared first with the Zoological Institute around 1835, consisted of the "tamer" entering a wagon cage or den of wild animals. The animals did not perform as such, but only allowed the man to be in the cage with them. These men were not called trainers, but tamers. Illustrations in heralds and newspaper ads showed the animal men in a cage full of snarling beasts. One of the earliest lithographs, reproduced here, shows Van Amburgh with a group of lions and tigers. Under the drawing it says "group of PERFORMING animals, but it is very doubtful that they did any tricks."

Around 1880 the picture changed, the larger circuses presented of "thrill" acts to capture the public's fancy, and the man in the lion's den was no longer quite so popular. W. W. Cole's New York and New Orleans Circus, in 1874, did advertise four performing lions. Howe's Great London in 1872 featured "Molock", intre-

pid East Indian who vanquished in a lair of tigers. In 1878 the John Robinson show carried a leopard act and the Great London show advertised Alfred Sill and his tigers. Many of the larger shows like W. C. Coup, Adam Forepaugh, Sells Bros. and Barnum rarely carried such acts.

Early in the 1890s the wild animal presentations were refined and actual performing animals were presented. Generally recognized as the first act presented in a steel arena was that of Col. Edgar Daniel Boone and Miss Carlotta on the Adam Forepaugh Show in 1891. The program of the show that year lists the act as display No. 2 and states five forest bred lions in a forty foot circular steel cage will sit on pedestals, hold banners, play seesaw, ride a bicycle and pull a chariot. We can find no reference to Col. Boone being on the show before or after the 1891 season.

Thanks to Richard Flint, of the Circus World Museum staff, we have a description of the act from a quotation in a Keokuk, Iowa, paper in 1891. The review was as follows:

"After the imposing entree came a startling novelty. In a steel bound ring forty feet in diameter and of sufficient height to prevent the escape of the animals that might be confined within it, appeared a gentleman and a lady, Col. Edgar Daniel Boone and Miss Carlotta, and two

hounds. A moment later a big elephant came walking into the tent pushing a cage of three lions. The cage was backed up to the entrance to the steel ring. The door was opened and the three kings of the forest came bounding down into the enclosure. The people were startled; but apprehension soon gave way to the admiration and wonder at the exhibition of the lion trainers' supremacy over their monster pets. The lions formed pedestals, held ropes for the hounds to jump over, played seesaw, rode a tricycle, fired a pistol, romped with Col. Boone and seemed to enjoy the whole performance."

"The lion tamer of Forepaugh's show has been telling the city editor of the Moline Republican Journal that his beasts have been so long caged that they are scared out of their wits when they find themselves at liberty, and that the lion that got out at Rock Island Tuesday afternoon would not have harmed a little child. By which we learn that the highly inflamed billboards do not tell all the lies about the circus." This is from a copy of the Davenport Democrat in the Museum files.

Col. Boone and Millie Carlotta were not on the show after the 1891 season. In fact there was no wild animal act on the Great Forepaugh show in 1892. For the 1893 season the show's elephant trainer George Arstingstall broke a lion act and his name was carried in the advertising couriers in 1893 was the wild animal trainer. However the route book program listing states that the lions were trained by Arstingstall but exhibited by Albert Stadler.

Again we thank the Circus World Museum for giving us the following report

Lucia Zora began training wild animals ahead of Mable Stark, making Zora the first lady trainer in America.



taken from a Washington D. C., newspaper dated April 25, 1893.

"... The first event of the performance is a novelty this year, and consists of a big iron barred corral, set up in the midst of the main tent, in which a happy family of two American panthers, two Asiatic leopards, two lions with a pair of huge dogs, a Dane and a mastiff, and a small black bear, all go through a concerted drill under the direction of Albert Stadler, a nifty little black-haired Swede, who handles his big pets like kittens. The group of animals was trained within the past two months by Mr. Arstingstall, the premier elephant trainer of the country, and they do credit to their instructor. It was the first time that the animals had ever been put through their paces, except on a board floor, and they were a little nervous when turned into the big cage on the ground. One of the leopards particularly was inclined to make things interesting, and half a dozen times threw herself back, cat-like, with a vicious spit, and struck at her keeper, who coolly returned the attention with a flick of the training whip across the open jaws, and the show went merrily on. The animals built pyramids of themselves, and two of the lions seesawed on a long board across a trestle, while Stadler beat time for them with his whip..."

Steel arena acts were originated in Europe and were rather common there prior to 1900 and it was natural that some of the European trainers would be brought to the United States.

The famous Hagenbeck's Zoological Gardens in Hamburg, Germany, pioneered the performing wild animal acts as we know them today. In 1893 the Hagenbeck Zoological Arena at the Chicago World's Fair featured a number of acts imported from Germany. A color folder in the author's collection tells of lions on horseback and a group of twenty animals appearing in the steel arena.

Many of the larger shows resisted the wild animal presentations, a check of the Barnum show programs from 1871 until its final year of 1918 reveals only one act, that of Mlle Adgies and her 10 lions in 1915. Although the act was featured in a special lithograph it was presented in an end ring in a wheeled cage with other performing animal acts in the other rings at the same time. It was one of the last displays of the show and did not open the performance as is usually the case. We could also find no evidence of the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows using such an act any season.

It would appear that the cycle of wild animal acts on circuses phased out late in the 1880s to a great degree.

One explanation for this is the surge of wild animal shows appearing in amusement parks and carnivals. European trainers like Capt. Frank C. Bostock and Col. Francis Ferari came to America around the turn of the century and brought large acts with them. Both of these men went on to own very large wild

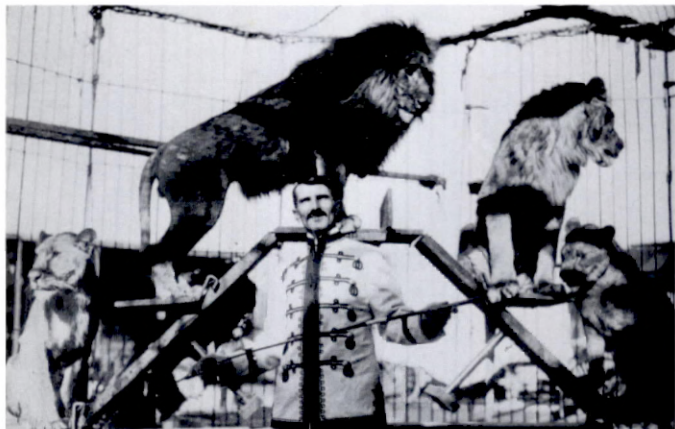


Col. Edgar Daniel Boone and Miss Carlotta, shown in this very rare photo, were the first to present trained wild animals in an American circus, the year 1891. All illustrations are from the author's collection.

animal shows and carnivals. Bostock came to America in 1893 with an animal show that played fourteen weeks under canvas at Fifth and Flatbush Avenues in Brooklyn, N. Y.

In his book *The Big Cage*, Clyde Beatty calls Frank C. Bostock the greatest wild animal trainer of all time. An Englishman, Bostock was born into a circus family of animal trainers. Bostock presented many caged acts with his shows but also featured a number of other very fine trainers. In his book *The Training of Wild Animals*, published in 1903 he wrote about some of the trainers who worked for him. He tells of Edward Deyerling, chief animal trainer at the Hagenbeck show at the Chicago Exposition in 1893, receiving his tuition under Bostock in England in the 1800s. Deyerling worked an act of five lions in 1893, a small affair compared with the exhibitions of today (1903), Bostock continues. Captain Jack Bonavita was Bostock's prize student. It was at the Pan-American Exhibition in 1901 that Bonavita first presented his famous act consisting of twenty-seven grown lions. Bonavita was elected this year to the Circus Hall of Fame.

Mme. Louise Morelli, a Frenchwoman, worked jaguars, leopards and panthers in French on the Bostock shows. Herman Weedon handled mixed groups and



Capt. Richard "Dutch" Ricardo's span of working wild animals was one of the longest of any American trainer. He is



shown here with a lion group at the Peru quarters of the American Circus Corporation.

John Helliott was a featured trainer on the Peru shows and later broke cats for Clyde Beatty in the 1930s.

Charles Day appeared with the Bostock family for thirty years.

One of the truly great wild animal men of America Captain Richard "Dutch" Ricardo (Warner), joined the Bostock show at an early age and while acting as cage-boy for Albert Stadler, mentioned above, stepped in and took over the act when Stadler became ill. Ricardo remained with Bostock for twelve years. Frank C. Bostock died at the age of 46 in 1912.

Col. Francis Ferari came to the United States a bit later than Bostock and presented his large wild animal show at Brighton Beach, N. Y., in 1906. Playing parks in the summer he toured a carnival in the late fall and by 1912 the Col. Francis Ferari United Exposition Shows advertised 200 performing animals and six trainers.

At the turn of the century a few of the larger circuses were presenting big cage acts. Walter L. Main in 1896 advertised "Wallace" the horse riding lion. The 1897 Main newspaper ads were illustrated with a cut of mixed cat act. The show advertised a Prof. Vallendeck with the lion riding horse in 1899. The W. H. Harris Circus advertised trained lions in 1897.

Of the big three Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros. and Forepaugh-Sells only the later used cage acts around 1900. The Forepaugh-Sells show had an act consisting of 10 polar bears from 1897 through 1905. A 1907 ad for the Forepaugh-Sells show had a tiger riding a horse and the couriers also had such illustrations, but there is no listing of a wild animal act in the 1907 program. By 1906 Campbell Bros. had Prof. Vanburg's mixed act and the show also had an arena act in 1908. The Norris & Rowe show advertised trained lions in 1902 and may have presented such acts, for sure Mille Rite had a group consisting of a lion, leopard, tiger, puma and hyena in 1906.

By 1910 many ten and twenty car circuses again began to feature steel arena acts. The Carl Hagenbeck Circus in 1905 and 1906 may have again set the pace. In

1905 Charles Judge presented a tiger riding an elephant, Herman Boger worked a mixed act of 18 tigers, lions, leopards, polar bears and Great Dane dogs. John Dudak worked a large Polar bear act, John Penji had a leopard riding a horse and Dolly Castle worked a group of lions. Most of these trainers except for

Peter Taylor ranks among the greatest lion trainers and was Clyde Beatty's early idol. Taylor was an Englishman who learned his craft at the Hagenbeck Zoo in Hamburg, Germany.



Miss Castle were back in 1906. Boger, Judge and Dudak moved to the Wallace show when it bought the Hagenbeck circus in 1907.

In 1908 John Helliott worked the big Hagenbeck mixed group plus the Polar bears. Phil Castang handled two other cage acts. Edward Sauer came on H-W in 1910 with a lion-leopard act, Helliott continued the big mixed act and Dudak handled the arctic bears. Louis Roth was with Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1912 working both the mixed and the bear act. By 1913 three different trainers handled the acts; Emil Schwyer the mixed group, Ernest Albers the bears and Edward Wolff the lions and leopards. For some reason Albers took the big mixed act in 1914 and Schwyer the polar bears. By 1915 the original large mixed Hagenbeck act was too old to work and Schwyer handled a leopard group and a Prof. Valdez the bears. A mixed act was back in 1916 worked by Schwyer with Capt. Dutch Ricardo working a group of tigers and Mrs. Ricardo presenting the tiger-elephant number. These three were back in 1917. In 1918 all of the animal acts were worked by Emil Schwyer and the same was true in 1919.

In 1920 the featured trainer on the Hagenbeck show was again John Helliott who remained for a number of years. Dolly Castle came back and was featured in a special lithograph in 1922. Bob McPherson came on in 1923 and Ethel McCracken replaced Dolly Castle that year, and also made the 1924 season. In 1926 Clyde Beatty worked 22 lions and tigers. By 1927 Miss Castle was back and a mixed group was handled by Grace Irwin. Jules Jacot handled a tiger act and Clyde Beatty began his real career as the feature wild animal trainer. For the 1927 season Beatty added eight cats from McPherson's act making a total of 30 lions and tigers.

From 1927 through 1934 Clyde Beatty was the real attraction of the Hagenbeck show and was joined by Capt. Bernardi 1928, 29 and 30, Jules Jacot in 1931 and

1933 and John Helliott in 1932. By 1930 Beatty had worked up to a group of forty lions and tigers and was pulled to the Ringling Barnum show for the New York-Boston dates each year 1931 through 1934. He went back to the Hagenbeck show for the tented season.

Following Beatty's move to the new Cole show in 1935 Bert Nelson was brought from the Barnes show for 1935 Hagenbeck Wallace-Forepaugh Sells show along with Madam Rasputin, the mad monk's daughter, who was placed in the arena with an act broken someone else. John Helliott worked with her and also presneted a lion on a horse number. In 1937, when the show was leased by Howard Y. Bary, Terrell Jacobs came from the Al G. Barnes show. Bary had Blacaman in with some lions in 1938, making a complete record of wild animal acts on every tour of the Hagenbeck Wallace show from 1907 to 1938.

The Sells Floto Circus by 1913 had hired Dutch Ricardo who with his wife Marguerite presented wild animal acts. In 1914 Lucia Zora was working one cage act in one ring while Mrs. Ricardo worked another at the same time. Zora was a feature on the show in 1915, 1916 and 1917. We were unable to establish if there was a steel arena act on the show in 1918 and 1919, none are listed in newspaper ads. When the Sells Floto show came under the Mugivan ownership Stella Rowland presented a mixed group of cats in 1921. The show did not have a cat act in 1922 or 1923. But in 1924 there were four trainers working five big cage acts. A Miss Jacot worked a leopard and puma act, Jules Jacot handled a tiger and a separate lion act. Aage Christensen worked a large tiger act and a new young man named Allen King handled another lion act. In 1925 a tiger elephant act was handled by Christensen, Theodore Schroeder presented a polar bear and a tiger act, and John Helliott worked a large mixed act. By 1926 only one trainer was on the program, Aage Christensen. In 1927 the acts were worked by Ted Schroder. In 1928 John Helliott handled a polar bear act and Peter Taylor was in with the tiger riding elephant as well as handling a large mixed act. The last season for wild animal acts on the Floto show was 1929, when Jules Jacot worked a lion act, Mable Stark presented her tigers and a group of twenty lions and tigers were handled by Allen King. The show did not use cat acts in 1930, 1931 and 1932.

Our files on the performers on the John Robinson show are a bit sketchy, but it is known that Marguerite Ricardo worked a lion act in 1911 and a polar bear act was handled by Ernest Albers that same year. In 1923 John "Chubby" Guilfoyle had a lion act on the Robinson show and Pete Taylor presented the big feature mixed act. Miss Billie Burton presented a leopard on a horse, Miss Verne Hauser worked a group of leopards, Harriett Guilfoyle had a riding lion act and young



Clyde Beatty, the greatest wild animal showman of all time, learned his trade on the Corporation shows. This photo shows him on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1926.

Clyde Beatty worked the polar bears that he had been with on the Gollmar Bros. Circus the year before. In 1924 Beatty again handled his polar bears, Dolly Castle handled a riding tiger act and both Guilfoyle and Pete Taylor worked mixed acts. Only two acts were on the Robinson show in 1925, Dutch Ricardo with lions and Lorraine Wallace with tigers. In 1926 with Beatty moving to the Hagenbeck show Theodore Schroeder took over the polar bears, Nellie Roth handled the tigers, Margaret Thompson presented the riding tiger and Ione Carl, wife of cookhouse man "Mitt" Carl wrestled a tiger and worked a group of eight lions. Ione Carl handled her two acts again in 1927 and Schroeder was with the polar bears. In 1928 Mable Stark was on JR with her tigers and Bert Noyes had the bears.

Allen King presented this act of 18 tigers on Sells-Floto in 1929. His last big act was on Cole Bros. in 1935.



Terrell Jacobs came from the Christy show with a lion act that year.

Before closing on the shows operated by the American Circus Corporation it should be noted that steel arena acts were on both the Howe's Great London in 1921 and the Gollmar show in 1922. Hattie Guilfoyle had a lion act in 1921 and her husband had elephant riding tigers and a six tiger act was worked by Louis Roth. The Gollmar show also had a number of acts. Mrs. Guilfoyle had a puma act, and also a leopard act, Chubby Guilfoyle had two mixed acts and elephant trainer Joe Metcalf worked a lion on a horse. The last act before the races was "Solomon" the fire eating aerial lion presented by Harriett Guilfoyle.

When Chester Monahan leased equipment for his 1925 Gollmar show from the Corporation he also took a couple of wild animal acts and they were worked by Dutch Ricardo and Dolly Castle.

The original Gollmar show used wild animal acts only a few seasons. In 1912 the show used a lion act presented by Margaret Thompson and in 1913 and 1914 the show featured the "Herr Dreisbock" wild animal show from

Europe. Actually the Dreisbock acts were show owned and were presented by Gerald Erwin and Miss Thompson.

The Gollmars probably were feeling a bit of heat from other shows of their size during this period that had cat acts. Jones Bros. and Wilson in 1914 and 1915 presented a big feature wild animal act advertised as the \$50,000 lion group, worked by Peter Taylor in 1914 and Peter Turner (probably Taylor) in 1915. In 1916 the Cook Bros. & Wilson show used the same paper and advertised Peter Taylor. On both these shows a leopard act was worked by a woman by the name of Zira, also featured in special lithographs. Taylor worked a lion act on the Coop and Lent Circus in 1917.

A few years earlier a young man by the name of Al G. Barnes was presenting a group of lions in an animal show on the C. W. Parker carnival. In 1910 Barnes took his own circus on the road, featuring trained animals of all kinds. By 1914 the Al G. Barnes Circus was large enough to present at least seven different steel arena acts. Two of the trainers were to become truly outstanding, Louis Roth and Mable Stark. Other trainers on the Barnes show in 1914 were Bob Thorton with a comedy bear act and a hi-bred lion-tiger riding a horse. Martha Florine had a leopard group as well as a horse ridden by a tiger, a bear, dog and chimp were worked by Fred Vallie. Miss Stark handled three riding bears and Roth a tiger group.

By 1916 Louis Roth was working 25 lions, probably the biggest group on tour at the time, and Mable Stark had begun her tiger act.

During this period the Barnes show remained a trained animal performance with little or no standard circus acts. The 1920 season is a good example of the type of program given by Barnes. Dutch Ricardo opened the steel cage acts with a group of pumas, Mable Stark followed with a wrestling bear and tiger. Pearl Hamilton presented a riding leopard, bear, dog and monkey and Roy Stevens handled polar bears. Vern Venable had

Louis Roth was head trainer on the Al G. Barnes Circus for many years and was Mable Stark's teacher.

three riding lions in an act. Mable Stark worked 20 tigers and Ricardo 12 lions. For the final act of the show Mable Stark worked the aerial lion, rising to the top of the tent. Louis Roth had moved to another show for a season or two.

In 1924 Roth was back working the tigers and a big lion act and Nellie Roth, Mable Gardner, Agnes Lausten, Bessie Dufoor and Margaret Graham all worked different acts. John T. Backman presented a leopard riding a zebra and young Bert Nelson had a group of polar bears. Mable Stark was on the Ringling Barnum Circus.

By 1927 Bert Nelson and Roth were working various acts and a mixed act was handled by Herman Zigler. Alma Taylor was in the cage with pumas and panthers. The performance in 1929 had a lion group with Miss Bobby Todd, the riding tiger with Alma Taylor, Roth's daughter Betty wrestling a tiger (ala Mable Stark) and Johnny Meyers, who had been on the Patterson Circus in 1922, worked a group of lions. Roth had the tigers again.

In 1930 the first year under the Corporation some of the old Barnes trainers were joined by a few of the Peru trainers. Jules Jacot worked lions, Joe Metcalf tigers and Mable Stark was back with 15 tigers. For the 1931 season Terrell Jacobs handled his lions, Mable Stark her tigers and Johnny Meyers lions, Mildred Douglas worked the tiger on the elephant. Both Jacobs and Stark remained with the Barnes through the 1936 season. Meyers was there in 1932 and 1933.

In 1936 Burt Nelson was back from the Hagenbeck show and he joined Jacobs and Stark for one of the greatest lineups of wild animal talent ever to grace a big top. In 1937 Jacobs went to Hagenbeck for Howard Y. Bary and Bert Nelson was featured on Barnes. When the 1938 season opened Mable Stark presented a mixed act and Frank Phillips had a lion group. Following the closing of the Ringling Barnum show Terrell and Dolly Jacobs were among the features to join the enlarged Barnes show with Mable Stark remaining, throughout the rest of the 1938 season when Al G. Barnes Sells-Floto presented Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Features.



Bert (Cardburt Nelson Snyder) Nelson began on the Barnes show in 1925 and was the feature on Hagenbeck-Wallace-Forepaugh-Sells in 1935.

In the period from 1910 to 1930 many of the smaller railroad circuses in the 10 and 15 car class presented wild animal acts.

During the 1909 and 1910 seasons Al F. Wheeler, and in 1911 the Downie & Wheeler circuses featured a Capt. H. Snyder and his wild animals. During the 1915 to 1917 seasons Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circuses advertised a "Vincent De Guerra" and his lion act. Vincent was Jules Jacot in 1917, as identified in a 1917 Yank photo, and perhaps the other years as well. During these years those shows that did not have a steel arena act in the big show carried a fighting lion act in the side show. As a child Joe McKinnon remembers seeing the fighting lion in the side show of the Sun Bros. nine car circus in 1916. He also remembers a "small" steel arena being

Mable Stark was without question the greatest lady wild animal trainer of all time. This photo was taken in the 1920s.





Terrell Jacobs, "the Lion King", is shown with a group of 18 lions on the Barnes show around 1934.

in an end ring on either Sparks or Sun Bros. A check of the Sparks Circus couriers and route books verifies that it was indeed the Sparks show that featured a wild animal act. It was presented by Fritz Brunner, the menagerie superintendent during the period from around 1912 to 1916.

A full search of the Sparks advertising and programs indicates that the show featured wild animal acts over its entire life. From around 1920 on the show's head menagerie man presented a steel arena act.

In many years a woman also worked some of the acts. Louis Reed the elephant man was menagerie boss following Brunner and it is not clear if he worked

Franz Woska was featured trainer with the Sparks Circus, and later worked a cat act in the Sunday performances at the Sarasota winterquarters of Ringling-Barnum, where he was menagerie superintendent.



the cat acts, probably not. In 1923 Franz Woska joined the show as a wild animal trainer, handling the tigers. Steve Batty worked the lions that year, and Woska and Batty continued with these two acts through the 1926 season. In 1923 Woska replaced Reed as the animal boss and also presented a polar bear act that year. In 1925 Mrs. Dorothy Batty worked a leopard act and the tiger act was shelved. In 1926 the leopards were handled by Harriet Guilfoyle and Woska bought the tigers back in addition to his polar bear number. During the 1927 tour Miss LaVerne Houser took the leopards, but Mrs. Guilfoyle was back with the act again in 1928. Chubby Guilfoyle joined the show in 1927 taking the lion act Batty had worked, and continued with the lions in 1928. Woska continued with his tigers and the polar bears until 1928. John Renwick worked the artic act in 1929, the last year it was presented by the Sparks show. That same year LaVerne Houser worked the lion act and Harriett Guilfoyle was back with the leopards. For the 1930 season there were no lady trainers, Franz Woska handled the lion and tiger act, and Frank Phillips worked the leopards. For the final season of the Sparks show, 1931, LaVerne Houser handled the leopards and Woska again presented both the lions and the tigers. The Sparks titled was returned in 1946 as a truck show owned by James Edgar and he hired Damoo Dhotri with a mixed act as a feature.

A number of theories have been advanced as to why the many smaller circuses in the United States turned to wild animal acts in the 1910s and 1920s. Two circus press agents, Gardner Wilson and Robert Hickey authored an article in the April 12, 1924, Billboard titled "The Circus Program Metamorphosis" and spoke to the question. They commented, "High prices have caused most circuses in the United States to adopt trained wild animal acts as the major part of their programs. The human element, of well known acts of all description, for so many years the lovable and distinctive characteristic feature of American circuses, has been replaced by trained wild



This unknown lady trainer is shown in a small square steel arena typical of those used on smaller circuses in the 1910s.

animals exhibitions and gorgeously beautiful pagents.

The cause of this change is directly traceable to high prices. Other factors, it is true, have entered into this circus program metamorphosis, but primarily 'cutting down the nut' has made the trained wild animal circuses prevalent. The public has not stayed away-at least the last two years - because of trained wild animals."

The article continues to review the arrival of the trained wild animal circus sifting its beginning at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, with the Hagenbeck animal show from Germany. (They must have been unaware of the Hagenbeck show ten years before at the Chicago fair.)

The authors went on to state that the Hagenbeck show fully lived up to its title of 'new and novel', so much so that after the closing of the fair the Hagenbeck show toured the US to phenomenal success. Following the two tours of the show in 1905 and 1906 that astute showman Ben Wallace seeing an opportunity to build his circus combined with the Hagenbeck animals, resulting with the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus. The success of the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace circus was great. Here though the trained wild animal circus stopped, for inspite of the success of the Hagenbeck-Wallace organization the remaining American circuses preferred to continue at their old pace.

"Then after the passing of a period of considerable years there came into prominence on the Pacific Coast a new showman in the person of Al G. Barnes, who evidently profiting by the Hagenbeck-Wallace success, was creating a name for himself and his circus with a trained wild animal program. (Incidentally the Al G. Barnes Circus was the first white top organization to revive the spectacle idea. On the Barnes circus this part of the show was costumed in lavish style, and prima

donnas, heard for the first time beneath canvas roof, added to its beauty.)

The Barnes show went along for a number of years with this sort of program, and made money. Then came the World War and all of its attending and many problems. Prices shot skyward and stayed there. Acts, especially feature acts, upon which the average circus depended as the main support of the show, raised their prices. If the circuses refused to pay they signed with the fairs and expositions that were calling for them, and more important, paying the salaries they demanded. Along with this jump in the price of talent came the enormous increase in railroad rates. To overcome these increases the circuses boosted their admission prices, but it was impossible to collect enough at the gates to meet the ever increasing costs.

About this time attention was directed to the Al G. Barnes Circus. Beyond the inconvenience of the shortage of labor it was going its even way, and was reported netting the usual percentage of profit. The animals, it was discovered, beyond their initial cost, were a great deal cheaper than high prices acts."

The authors continued with comments about the Howe's Great London show in 1921 and Gollmar Bros. in 1922 using a number of trained wild animal acts.

The theory of the authors was born out by the many smaller circuses in the 1920s. James Patterson, the carnival man had used lion acts on his Gollmar-Patterson show in 1917 and when he organized the Great Patterson Circus in 1922 it was natural that he would again have such an act, the featured male trainer was Johnny Meyers and Harriet Guilfoyle worked a bear act and a lion act that season. In 1923 Patterson's menagerie superintendent John Meyers worked the trained wild animals on the Gentry Bros. & Great Patterson Circus. Meyers continued with the Gentry-Patterson in that capacity again in 1924.

Andrew Downie's Walter L. Main Circus featured Captain Blondin with lions and Madam Aurora worked a riding lion act in 1922. In 1923 the Main show advertised LaBelle Marie and her tigers and in its final season of 1924 Frank Phillips was head trainer for Downie.

George Washington Christy presented a number of trained wild animal acts as part of the programs on Christy Bros. nearly every year the show was on the road from 1920 to 1930. Robert Dennize worked the cats in 1921 and Capt. John Hoffman worked the shows cats for a couple of years, 1924 for sure. Milton Grimes Herriot worked a lion act in 1924. In 1925 William Bernard was chief trainer for Christy. Terrell Jacobs came over from the number two Christy show, Lee Bros., in 1927. Jacobs had worked under head trainer Allan King on the Lee Show in 1925 and 1926.

In 1922 Mike Golden and associates took the Howe's Great London title on the road again, not associated with the



Johnny Meyers worked cats on all of the James Patterson circuses, where he had charge of the menagerie. This photo was taken on the Great Patterson Wild Animal Circus in 1922. He was with Barnes-Sells-Floto in 1937.

Mugivan and Bowers 1921 show. This show originally announced that they planned to hire no regular circus acts, but to have only a trained animal show. Jules Jacob was the man who worked the wild animals for the Howes show in 1921.

Fred Buchannon, who had been manager of the Great Patterson Circus in 1922, returned to the road with his own show again in 1923 when he organized the World Bros. Circus. Captain William Bernard worked in the steel arena for Buchannon in 1923. The World title became Robbins Bros. Circus in 1924 and Louis Furtell was the trainer. Furtell remained on Robbins for a couple of years. In 1929 Terrell Jacobs was on the Robbins show.

Another small rail show that had many owners in the 1920s was Golden Bros. Mike Golden first took the show on the road in 1923 and had Jules Jacob working lions and William Bernard with another lion act. Tessie Flakendorf worked a leopard act. In 1924 the show had no less than seven different trained wild animal acts in its program. Bernard was back, and Adolph Hildebruner worked a caged bear act, Ione Carl handled a lion and a leopard act, Martha Florine presented a riding lion and Miss Aletha Fletcher handled a mixed act. It is interesting to note that Golden lost the show to John Pluto in July of 1924 who then in turn sold it to George Christy in September of 1924. Christy turned it into Lee Bros. for 1925 and 1926 with the trainers mentioned above.

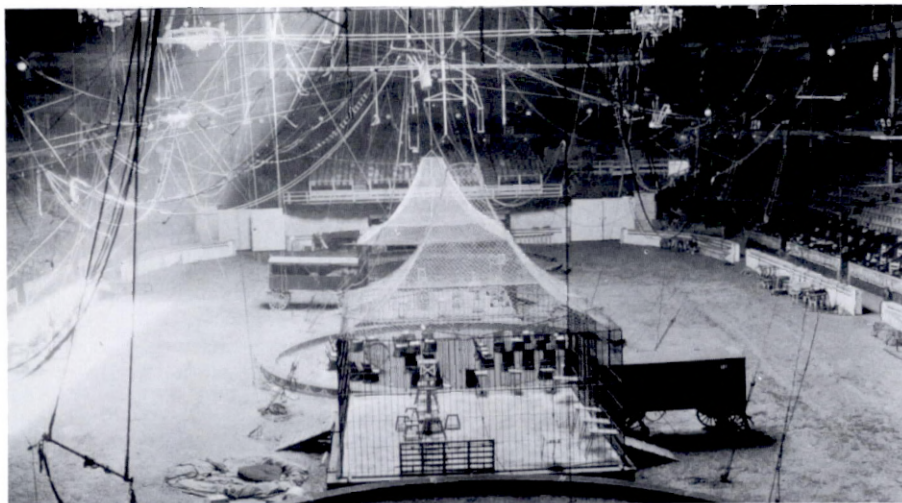
Two truck circuses of the 1920s presented trained wild animal acts, Downie Bros. in 1926 had Frank Phillips, at age 21, with an act, Phillips presented the act in 1927 also. The Honest Bill Shows had its ring master William Stokes in the arena with a few cats in 1923.

This superfluity of wild animal acts caused anguish and concern on the part of various humane societies across the country in the early 1920s. So much so that the noted trainer Peter W. Taylor wrote an article appearing in the June 30, 1923 Billboard titled "Training of Wild Animals for Circus and Stage Not Cruel." In the article he says, "The claim of the Humane Society that trainers use cruelty in training wild animals is not founded on facts, insofar at least as expert wild trainers are concerned. Experts never use cruel methods because they understand and love animals - if they do not they are useless trainers."

An experienced trainer knows as soon as he looks at an animal whether he can train it or not. Many animals can never be trained and these an expert trainer will not try to force training upon. Only the makeshift, who does not know the business of animals training, who perhaps has been pressed into service because he is handy, will work cheap, and is foolhardy enough to want to try it, will not recognize the ineptitude of the animal, and will use cruelty to force it into subjection. Such a person does not understand animals, is afraid of them and uses cruel methods to protect himself from them.

The life of a performing animal is not an unhappy one by any means. As a matter of fact he enjoys his life more and lives longer than the zoological park animal. Performing is a matter of exercise for him, which, by the way, most zoo animals lack. The performing animals have their regulation care, feed and exercise. On the other hand, I have seen lions in the Sahara, which, due to poor vegetation, furnishes very little game for their consumption, so thin that every rib in their bodies could be counted."

The last paragraph sheds a little light on Taylor's life and background. He continues, "The subject of the care and training of animals, both wild and domestic, is one that is quite familiar to me. My acquaintance with same began when I was four years of age in England."



At the age of nine I appeared before the late Czar Nicholas of Russia, who bestowed upon me the Royal Seal of Honor for my advanced knowledge of animal training. I graduated under the tutelage of Carl Hagenbeck Sr. My life has been filled with experiences in trapping and training wild animals. This knowledge of animals is my reason for presuming to reply to the allegation of the Humane Society. Wild animal training by experts is not cruel."

This same issue of the Billboard contained an article by Courtney Ryley Cooper titled "Inside the training Den." The fact that two articles on the subject of wild animal training appeared in a single issue of the "showman's bible" is indictive of the amount of interest and activity in this type of circus act in the early 1920s.

The season of 1922 may have been the pinnacle for trained wild animal acts on American circuses. There were fourteen railroad shows on the road that year, Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Gollmar Bros., Walter L. Main, Rhoda Royal, Sparks, Howe's Great London, Patterson, Christy and Campbell, Bailey and Hutchinson. Of these only Campbell, Bailey and Hutchinson failed to have at least one steel arena act in their program. Even the small Rhoda Royal had Harry Hall and a group of lions. At least fifty different men and women worked trained wild animal acts on circuses during the 1922 season.

The great interest in trained wild animal acts forced even the "Circus King", John Ringling to place them in the program of The Greatest Show on Earth in the early 1920s. Our research has not turned up a single trained wild animal act on the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows and it was not until 1921 that the big show advertised "Europe's Greatest Trained Animal Shows Now Acquired and Added to America's Ten-Times Greatest Circus."

But when the Ringling Barnum show went to trained wild animal acts it was

When the Ringling-Barnum Circus used wild animal acts in the early 1920s the arenas were square and there were no shoots, the cages were parked next to the arenas as is done today. Braathen Collection.

done in its usual spectacular manner. A total of four acts were brought to the show for the 1921 season. Display No. 2 presented three steel arenas, in ring one was Miss Olga Celeste, probably with lions; ring two Peter Radke with lions and in ring three Christain Shroder with polar bears. Display No. 4 was Rudolph Matthies and the "Seven Terribles", tigers.

Much to Mr. John's chagrin the trained

Theodore Shroder is acknowledged as the top polar bear trainer. Starting with R-B in 1921 he appeared with the Corporation shows before becoming Director of the Detroit Zoo for 13 years.



wild animals made as big a hit on his show as they did on the Howe's Great London or Hagenbeck-Wallace. But it may have been his brother Charles who exerted the authority, in any case for the 1922 season the number of trained wild animal acts was greatly expanded. Seven different trainers in seven different acts appeared in the program of the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows that year. Display No. 2 had Christain Shroder in ring one with polar bears, Bruno Radke with lions in ring two and Ernest (Theodore) Shroder in ring three with a second polar bear act. Display No. 4 presented Emil Pallenberg's uncaged black bears in rings one and three, Olga Celeste in the center ring with a wild animal act, and on the end stages were two domestic animal acts. Display No. 6 presented three fine tiger acts in three steel arenas simultaneously. In ring one was Mable Stark making her first appearance with the Big Show, in ring two Rudolph Matthies and in ring three Wilhelm Philadelphia, a Hagenbeck Zoo trainer.

For the 1923 performance the Greatest Show on Earth presented eight different caged acts. Dutch Ricardo joined the show that year and in display two he worked a riding lion as well as a riding tiger, while Christain and Theodore Shroder had polar bears in the end rings. Ricardo was back in the center ring for display four with a group of nine lions, and Bruno Radke had four lions in ring one and Philadelphia was in ring three with tigers. In display six Mable Stark had eight tigers including "Midnight" the black tiger and Rajah, the wrestling tiger, in the center ring. Rudolph Matthies worked his "Seven Terribles" in ring one.

For the 1924 season a true "circus spectacular" was staged by the Ringlings, FOUR steel arenas working at one time. Dutch Ricardo with lions, Mable Stark, tigers, Rudolph Matthies, tigers and Christian Shroder with polar bears. This is without question the largest display of trained wild animals performing at one time in the history of the circus, equaled only by the Alfred Court acts in three arenas in the 1950s.

Following the closing of the 1924 season there were to be no more trained wild animal acts on the Ringling Barnum circus, until John Ringling North gained control in 1938, other than Clyde Beatty in Garden dates in 1931, 32, 33 and 34. In his book, "The Big Top", Fred Bradna gives some insight into the reasons for the exit of the cat acts.

He says, "John Ringling's argument for abandoning the steel cage was logical from the showman's vantage. The big cage is a cumbersome apparatus. Forty feet in diameter, composed of steel sections, it must give stout security and, at the same time, be quick and easy to dismantle. Mr. Ringling always opened his program with the spec, which set the atmosphere excitingly. The long pause after this, while the cage was erected and



steel runways were stretched from the menagerie cages to the big top, to permit entrance of the lethally inclined performers, was distinctly anticlimactic. The runway presented another hazard, too, about which Mr. John continually fretted: in the event of fire or blowdown, that runway would block the most important exit."

Actually Mr. Bradna was in error and was probably mixed up in his memory of the wild animal acts of the early 1920s and the appearance of Clyde Beatty with the show in New York and Boston in the early 1930s. He was wrong in regard to the steel arena being erected following the spec. They were put up prior to the show and did not cause any delay in the performance, and even if they had been erected just prior to the acts it would not have been a problem as an aerial number could have been scheduled or a ground act in the other rings or on the hippodrome tract. Also there were no shoots, or runways from the menagerie. The wheeled cages were pulled into the tent and placed next to the steel cage and then removed following the act. During a couple of the 1920 seasons the steel arenas were square in shape and were placed on the wooden stages and not in the rings. The use of the steel arena actually was not a problem and never had

Beatty appeared with Ringling Barnum in Madison Square Garden in 1931-32-33 and 34. This photo was taken in 1934 in the Garden. Fred Bradna is standing at the right of the cage.

been on the many, many circus that had used them over the years. It is our opinion that John Ringling did not care for trained wild animal acts in the first place and only allowed them during the 1920s because they were very popular and that type of act was at it's height.

When John North took control of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows in 1938 he brought a number of features to the show. He hired Frank "Bring'em Back Alive" Buck and featured him in an elaborate spec tilted Napal. North also brought Terrell Jacobs from the Hagenbeck Wallace circus returning trained wild animal acts to the Greatest Show on Earth where they have

In 1939 Jacobs handled the largest number of lions and tigers ever presented, as a feature of Ringling-Barnum. Advertised as 50 animals he worked between 38 and 52 at various times during the season. The act lasted 17 minutes in Madison Square Garden, where this photo was taken.

been featured every year since then, except 1946.

Jacobs broke a black leopard act and it was in the arena following the spec. At the opening performance of the 1938 season in Madison Square Garden Jacobs appeared in the arena with one leopard in a very brief act. The other eleven leopards did work during the New York engagement at some performances, but a fight broke out during one of the presentations in the Garden, and the act was cut from the program for the rest of the season.

Following the leopards, at once, was Marie D. "Dolly" Jacobs and her horse riding lion. In display four Jacobs was back with the lion act he had worked on the Barnes show in 1936 and Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1937.

For the 1939 season North purchased a number of additional lions and tigers and the Terrell Jacobs act was beefed up to an advertised number of 50 lions and tigers. The steel arena was fifty feet in diameter, the largest cage ever used. Dolly Jacobs worked her lion riding a horse as the first act on the program and elephant girl Diane Lovett was recruited to present a tiger riding an elephant as the second act on the program. The Pallenberg uncaged bears followed in the end rings and then the big Terrell Jacobs act, making the first four numbers of the performance trained animal acts.

In the review of the opening performance of the 1939 season appearing in the Billboard it stated that Jacobs worked a total of thirty-eight animals. Don Smith, a good friend of Terrell Jacobs says that during the season Jacobs actually did work over 40 animals, making it the largest number of animals to appear in a single act. Dolly Jacobs says 52 were worked. We can find no reference to Clyde Beatty ever working over forty animals at one time.

When Jacobs was brought to the Ringling-Barnum show in 1938 his animals were housed in typical Bill Curtiss Hagenbeck-Wallace cages. These remained on the show in 1939, and stood out in design from the additional traditional Ringling-Barnum style cages in the backyard where they were lined up next to the big top. They were not placed in the menagerie as was the case on most shows.

Because of the popularity of the trained wild animal presentations John North imported Alfred Court and a number of his acts and trainers to appear in the 1940 program. With the outbreak of the second World War Court was forced to remain in the United States for a number of years.

Alfred Court, a Frenchman, was one of the greatest horizontal bar performers in the history of the circus, and had toured most of Europe and the United States as an acrobat before setting foot in a wild animal arena. By 1917 he was 35 years of age and was the director of a small circus touring Mexico, having given up his horizontal bar act, when the wild animal



trainer turned up drunk for a performance. With no one else available Court stepped into the arena and worked the act in the emergency. That was his beginning in the wild animal field. By the late 1930s Court had become recognized as one of the truly outstanding trainers in the world and had a number of acts and a group of trainers working for him. The various acts appeared with different circuses in Europe in a given season. When the acts were brought to the United States for the Ringling-Barnum show in the winter of 1940 they came from England, Norway and Sweden.

In his book, "My Life With The Big Cats", Court states that he brought eighty cats and fifty tons of baggage to Sarasota for the Ringling show. In 1939 Court had four different acts working and the tiger act that was working with the Anderson Circus in Norway was sold to that show, so only the three mixed acts were brought to the United States. The animals had not worked for a couple of months so Court and his trainers had to work feverishly to prepare the acts for the Garden opening.

With Court were his understudy Damoo Dhotre, Fritz Schultz, Harry and May Kovar. When the show opened a total of sixty animals were worked in three rings, included were lions, tigers, black jaguars, snow leopards, black panthers, pumas, cougars, Great Dane dogs, polar bears, Himalayan bears, spotted leopards, mountain lions, spotted jaguars, ocelots and black leopards. This is without question the greatest variety of trained wild animals ever presented in America.

May Kovar was in ring one and Frederic Olsen (Schultz) in ring three. Court and Damoo alternated in the center ring. The three acts worked for 30 minutes with special lighting and props that were painted red, white and blue. The style of the presentation was strictly European and was not the "fighting" type act American circus goers were used to. Using only a small pole and a whip, Alfred Court presented a truly great perfor-

This 1942 Robert Good photo shows Court, in tux, and his trainers Fritz Schultz, Damoo Dhotre and Joe Walch.



Alfred Court, the master trainer, brought sixty animals and four other trainers with him when he joined the Ringling-Barnum circus in 1940.

mance, climaxing with Court using a leopard as a neckpiece as he walked about the steel arena.

In 1941 the same basic acts were presented. May and Harry Kovar alternated in one ring, Court and Damoo in the center ring and Schultz traded off with a new trainer to the show Joseph Walsh.

For the 1942 season three new groups were broken, using mostly lions, tigers, black bears, polar bears and leopards. The Kovars were gone and Joe Walsh handled one end ring and Fritz Schultz the other with Damoo and Court alternating in the center ring.

Court's original contract with North called for two years and in his book he says he attempted to sell the animals to the show following the two seasons of 1940 and 1941. In 1943 Robert Ringling gained control of the circus and Court was successful in selling the animals to the show providing he remain for two additional seasons, supervising the acts. Court was sixty years of age in 1943. Damoo was in the United States Army

and Schultz, a German alien had been placed in a concentration camp. For the 1943 season Court elevated some of the assistant trainers William Storey, Robert Tate and Jack Berry and brought back Harry and May Kovar.

During the 1944 Ringling-Barnum tour the Court acts were handled by May and Harry Kovar and Joe Walsh.

For the 1945 season Court, with the assistance of his nephew Willy Storey, broke a group of twelve leopards to work with a group of six girls. Damoo returned to display the act. Following the opening Alfred Court retired from the show and from wild animal training.

The 1946 season was the last that the Greatest Show on Earth would be under the direction of Robert Ringling. Mrs. Aubrey Haley, Mrs. Charles Ringling and the other "49ers." Robert Ringling chose not to include a trained wild animal act in the 1946 performance, although he had purchased all of the animals owned by Alfred Court.

When John Ringling North again gained control of the circus in 1947 he quickly put the Court animals back to work. Damoo Dhotre had been discharged from the Army and returned to the show to work the leopard group in 1945 and in 1946 he took the Ringling Barnum owned leopards to the motorized Sparks Circus. In 1947 he combined jaguars and pumas with the leopards and presented them in ring one during the entire season. Michael Konzelmann brought a new group of polar bears billed as Konselman's Polar Bears which appeared in the center ring part of the season and in ring three part of the season. The third act in the three arena presentation consisted of three different acts and three trainers during the season. In the Madison Square Garden opening Vincent (Sunday) Dorr worked a mixed group of the Court animals. During the early part of the season Capt. Roman Proske was with the show handling his tigers. Also appearing during the season was Rudolf Matthies with a tiger group.

Willie Storey, a nephew of Alfred Court, and now manager of the Sells & Gray Circus worked this mixed act on the Big Show in 1943. Robert Good Photo.

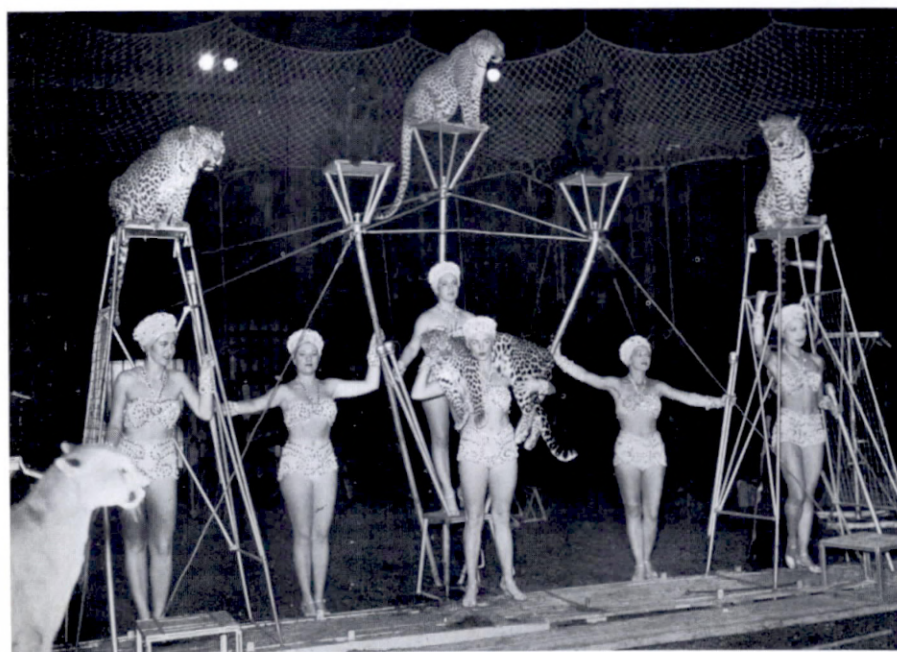




Rudolph Matthies first appeared with Ringling-Barnum in 1921 and returned in 1947, handling tigers both times.

This was a return engagement for Matthies having worked a tiger act with the show during the 1921 to 1924 seasons. The 1947 season is the only instance we know of where acts have not worked the full season. In his book Proske states that John North wanted him for the full season

Alfred Court's final act on the Ringling show was a group of leopards and black panthers in 1945. Using six girls it was probably the most unusual act of its kind.



but he had contracted for other dates during part of the season.

Rudolph Matthies and his tigers opened the 1948 season in the center ring with Damoo in ring one and the Konselman polar bears in ring three. On the road Damoo was moved to the center ring and Matthies to ring one.

The Konselman polar bears were replaced in 1949 by the Claussen (Klauser) uncaged brown bears. Matthies and Damoo were back in the arenas in the end rings, making their last appearances with the show.

The Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus abandoned, temporarily, the trained jungle cats for the 1950 and 1951 tours. In their place the Albert Rix act was imported. The black, brown and polar bears were, however, worked in a steel arena.

In 1952 the cats were back. Oscar Knoyot and his 8 lions were brought from Europe and featured in the center ring. The Albert Rix and Robert Laydar handled uncaged bears in the end rings.

For the 1953 season the Knoyot act was increased to 12 lions and Trevor Bale, making his first appearance with the big show had six tigers in ring one and Albert Rix was back with his big cat act of 12 mixed bears. The three acts appeared in steel mesh wire arenas. The standard steel arena had been replaced by the new type wire enclosure a year before.

Trevor Bale moved to the center ring in 1954, to remain in that featured spot for a number of years. Paul Fritz worked a lion group in one end ring while the caged Rix bears were in the other.

Bale and Fritz were back in 1955 and a caged bear act was also presented by Walter Stone. Albert Rix was back with Bale and Fritz for the 1956 tour.

In 1957 only two trained wild animal acts were in the performance, Trevor



May Kovar was the only woman trainer in the Court group. She was killed by a lion at Gobel's Lion Farm in 1949 at the age of 49.

Bale in one end ring and Albert Rix in the other. But the Rix act was cut for the road tour following New York and Boston.

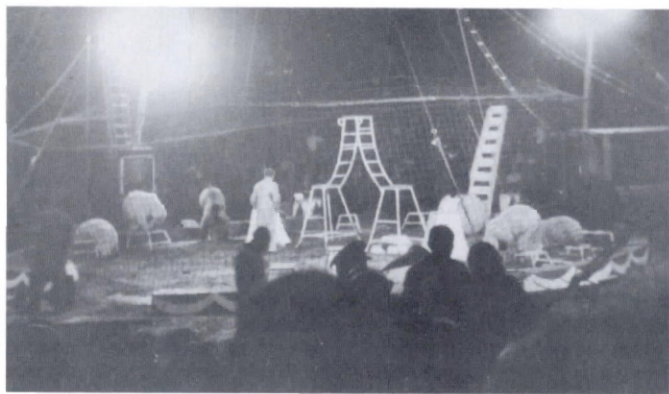
Joe Horwath with a tiger act appeared in the New York and Boston dates in 1958, with uncaged Klauser and Rix bear acts in a single display. This number was cut from the performance on the road.

Prof. George Keller and his mixed trained wild animal act made his first appearance with the Big Show in the Garden dates in 1959. A group of tiger were worked by Hans Nauman. Nauman and Keller were back for the Garden dates in 1960, Nauman for the full season and Keller in the Garden only.

Trevor Bale returned to the show in 1961 for the full tour and George Keller was added again for the Garden dates. For 1962 Bale continued for the full season with his tigers and Evelyn Currie and a mixed act were added for the New York and Boston stands. Only Bale appeared in the 1963 show, in the center ring. The same was true in 1964.

By 1965 John North had begun bringing large numbers of acts from the Eastern European countries, one of these was Adela Smieja with a group of lions. Mrs. Smieja remained in 1966 and her husband Blasjak followed her into the arena for a comedy routine with a single lion.

A new tradition was begun in 1966 when a second trained wild animal act was used to open the second half of the performance, following the intermission. The very popular Charly Baumann and his tigers was in this spot, making his first year with the Ringling-Barnum show. A third act followed Baumann, the Adolf Althoff horse riding tiger. The Althoff



Albert Rix first brought his large polar bear act to America in 1950 where it was the wild animal feature of Ringling-Barnum. This photo shows the act in the new wire mesh arena that was lowered into the ring curbs.

act was a sensation, using an unusually large tiger. The Adela Smieja, Baumann and the Althoff tiger continued with the show in 1967. Mrs. Smieja blew the show during the last part of the 1967 season in California, not wishing to return behind the iron curtain. The 1967 season was the last for the show to remain under the ownership and direction of the Ringling and North families.

When the Feld brothers and Roy Hofheinz purchased the show they continued with the Baumann and Althoff acts during their first season of 1968.

In 1969 the new master showman Irvin Feld startled the circus world by fielding a completely new second unit of the Greatest Show on Earth. The "blue" show used the Baumann and Althoff acts.

For the new red unit Feld brought the elephants, horses and trained tigers of the German Circus Williams, and the United States was introduced to the sensational Gunther Gebel-Williams, who quickly became the star of the show working elephants, horses and a fine tiger act.

For the 100th anniversary tour in 1970 the Felds continued with Baumann and Althoff on one unit and Williams on the other. In 1971 Wolfgang Holzmaier and a new lion act, from the French Amar Circus, worked in the red unit with Williams. On the blue unit Charly Baumann was joined by Dickie Chipperfield and a group of lions from England, who stayed only one year.

During the current 1972 season the blue unit brought Pablo Noel and a group of lions from the Spanish Circo Americano. Baumann has enlarged and polished his tiger act making it a highlight of the show. The red unit this year continues with Williams and Holzmaier.

So during the 34 years since 1938 the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has featured one or more caged trained wild animal acts every year except one, 1946. Our guess is that we shall see one in each of the performances of the present two Ringling-Barnum units

and the soon to be announced third unit from this time on.

Other railroad circuses have featured trained wild animal acts in the last 37 years. When the new Cole Bros. - Clyde Beatty Circus was organized in 1935 the owners Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell not only featured the Beatty act but also presented Allan King and his "Cage of Fury" that had been featured at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934. A month or so after taking to the road the show was cut in size and Allan King left. Clyde Beatty continued with the Cole show in 1936, 1937 and 1938. The show closed in midseason of 1938 and Beatty and additional acts and cars were added to the Adkins and Terrell number two show Robbins Bros. The Cole show did not have a trained wild animal act again until 1950 when the Chicago Stadium Corporation bought the show and placed Terrell Jacobs in the performance, sometimes under canvas sometimes in ball parks.

Roman Proske handled only tigers while in the United States. His only appearance with a tented circus was on Ringling-Barnum in 1947 at selected stands. He is shown here with Damoo in Philadelphia.



Capt. Christy worked lions with only one arm. He appeared on a number of truck circuses and is shown here on the WPA Circus in the late 1930s.

In 1939 a new show was organized using the Hagenbeck-Wallace equipment left in California following the 1938 closing. The Great American Circus presented Bert Nelson with a group of lions and tigers during its very brief tour.

There was a rash of railroad circuses on tour in 1945. The only one to take to the road the following year was Dailey Bros. In 1945 the Dailey show had Eddie Kuhn in its performance. Also out in 1945 on rails were Russell Bros. Pan Pacific with Dick Clemens and a group of lions, Austin Bros., who had Terrell Jacobs with it for a few weeks and Arthur Bros. who also had Terrell Jacobs for a few weeks.

The Dailey Bros. Circus did not have a caged wild animal act in 1946, but had Joe Howath with lions in 1947 and perhaps 1948. In 1949 the Dailey show presented three acts in its steel arena. Joe Horwath with polar bears, Rex Williams handled a tiger riding an elephant and Joe Horwath the lions.

Earlier we have mentioned a few truck shows that had trained wild animal acts in the 1920s. A surprising number of truck shows had small, mostly lion acts in the 1930s and 1940s. Our research has turned up the following shows and acts, but the list may not be complete.

In 1935 the Walter L. Main Circus had Capt. Walker and lions, and Swede Johnson was also on the Famous Robbins Circus in 1935. The Rice Bros. Circus was organized by Ray Marsh Brydon that year using equipment from the Bays Bros. show and animals that were sent back to Rochester winter quarters by the Cole show. The Allan King act went to Rice and King became a partner in the show. Jerome E. Smith had six lions on Lewis Bros. and Capt. Irwin Klauder work lions on Seils-Sterling.

Many truck shows carried small trained wild animal acts in 1936. Klauder, Johnson and Smith were back again with the same shows. A new show in 1936 Bockus & Kilonis booked the Capt. William Schultz acts, including Marion Knowlton and a small lion act. Manual



Capt. Irwin Klauder handled a small lion act on the Seils-Sterling truck circus for a number of years in the mid 1930s.

King, the boy lion trainer, joined the Great Dan Rice Circus in midseason. Bob Mathews with King Tuffy, the wire walking lion was on Kay Bros. Madam Bezoni and her lions were on Patterson Bros. The Seils-Sterling, Famous Robbins, Lewis Bros. and Kay Bros. carried the same acts in 1937. A man by the name of Sonderland had a small lion act on the Walter L. Main Circus that year. Ernest Engerer was with the tented WPA Circus in the late 1930s.

The 1938 season was a very bad one for rail and truck circuses alike. Many closed early in the season, some to never open again. The Lewis show had Jerome Smith and his lions with it when it opened. Seils-Sterling had Madam LaBelle Lutia working its lion act and the Famous Robbins show changed its name to World Bros. and again presented Swede Johnson, who used the name Capt. Sells. No record can be found of a trained wild animal act on a truck show in 1939. But the 1940s were to see a number of acts of various shows.

The Hamid-Morton Circus leased the Wallace Bros. equipment and presented

Manuel King, the boy wild animal trainer, appeared with the James M. Cole and Dan Rice circuses.



Clyde and Harriet Beatty making their first appearance with a truck circus. In 1941 the Bud Anderson Circus had Capt. Hart and his lions in the show. Fred Delmar and his lions were on Wallace Bros. in 1943, and that show had Ernest Engerer and his lions in 1944. Bailey Bros. Circus featured Dick Clemens and lions in 1944. Clyde Beatty had joined in ownership with the Wallace Bros. show in 1943 and it became the Wallace Bros. Clyde Beatty Circus. Terrell Jacobs appeared with the short lived Gilbert Bros. Circus in 1943 also.

In 1945 Clyde Beatty took his own circus on tour for the first time, using the equipment he had purchased from Ray Rogers owner of the Wallace Bros. Circus. Dolly Jacobs worked a group of lions on the Bailey show in 1945 and Captain Ernest Engerer and his student trainer Gladys Gillem, a former lady wrestler appeared with the little Bradley and Benson Circus.

The James M. Cole Circus had Capt. Christy and his lions on the show in 1946, the Engerer-Gillem act moved to Bailey Bros. and the new Sparks motorized circus featured Damoo Shorte and a group of leopards and panthers.

Roy Bible's wife, advertised as Ruth Roy, worked a small group of lions on Bible's Sello Bros. in 1947. Gladys Gillem was now working the Engerer act without Ernest on Bailey.

Capt. Christy and his lions were with

Aruim Singe, a young Indian trainer, presented lions on various shows owned by Ben Davenport.

Ayres and Katherine Davies Circus in 1949 and Prince El Ki-Gor and a mixed group was the feature of the new Biller Bros. Circus. The Prince stayed with Biller in 1950 and 1951. Eddie Kuhn after having his own little circus a few years before was on Rogers Bros. in 1950. Aruim Singe worked a group of lions on Ben Davenport's Campa Bros. in 1952 and was also on Wallace Bros. in 1952 and Diano Bros. in 1953. Dave Hoover, a son in law of Roger Barnes, had a few lions on the little Beers-Barnes Circus in 1954. Terrell Jacobs made his last tour with a circus in 1956 when he was featured with the Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus. Joe Horwath was with Rogers Bros. for a couple of seasons in the 1950s.

The Clyde Beatty railroad circus closed in 1956 and the following year it opened on trucks under new management and Beatty was the feature to remain until his death in 1965.

Eddie Kuhn had a fine mixed act on Cristiani Bros. in 1958 and 1959. Dave Hoover with a larger act was on Carson

David Hoover is now featured with the Clyde Beatty - Cole Bros. Circus. He is shown here with one of his first acts in 1952.



& Barnes in 1959. Red Hartman, Clyde Beatty's cage boy took over the Beatty act to finish the 1956 season, following Beatty's death. Eddie Kuhn was with Carson & Barnes in 1961.

Kelly-Miller had the Cunio group of leopards, panthers and great dane dogs in a steel arena worked by Rebecca Garner in 1961. The following year Fred Logan, the K-M head elephant trainer, started handling a group of lions on that show, he continued to present the act throughout the 1969 season when the show was renamed Carson & Barnes. He was joined by Don Carr with six lions in 1969 with two arenas going at one time. In 1970 Joe Horwath and Eddie Kuneman had acts on Carson & Barnes.

Mills Bros. Circus, long a user of European circus acts, brought Charles Zerbin to America for its 1961 season. John Zerbin took over the act following his father's death and was with the Mills show in 1962 and 1963.

Dave Hoover took over the Beatty act on the Beatty-Cole show in 1966 and has remained with that circus since. Johnny Golden, a Hoover student, had a group of lions on the Sells & Gray Circus in 1966. Swede Johnson appeared with Hoxie Bros. around this period and Hoxie Tucker purchased the act consisting of about five lions and Manual "Junior" Ruffin, another former Beatty cage boy took over the act. Billed as Prince Bogino, Ruffin the first Black man to present a trained wild animal act, was featured on Hoxie 1969 and has remained since.

Dave Hoover on Beatty-Cole, Junior Ruffin on Hoxie, and Eddie Kuneman on Carson & Barnes are the only trained wild animal acts being presented by a truck circus in 1972.

Another fine trainer, coming out of the Jungle Compound in Thousand Oaks, California, is Pat Anthony. Anthony's lions and tigers have appeared with Hamid-Morton and Polack Bros. indoor

Manuel "Junior" Ruffin, began as a cage boy with Clyde Beatty and is now on Hoxie Bros., he is the first black trainer. Wilson Poarch Col.



Gladys Gillem took over the Ernest Engerer act and presented it on Bailey Bros. truck show for a couple of seasons. She is shown here in 1947.

circuses for a number of years and is one of the largest mixed acts being worked in the United States today. Holtzmaier has 18 lions on Ringling Barnum. A number of other trainers are appearing in various other indoor shows today.

As we look back over the last 137 years that are covered in this article it is very clear that trained wild animal acts have been synonymous with the circus in America. Lions and tigers and elephants seemed to have been part and parcel with the circus as far as circus goers are concerned.

The high point was in the early 1920s when 99% of the circuses on tour presented one or more such acts.

After spending many, many hours in research and writing this article it is impossible for the author to resist the temptation to select his own all time great wild animal trainers, appearing in American circuses.

A total of 164 male and female trainers have been mentioned here. Our selection of the truly outstanding trainers would be the following.

Isaac Van Amburgh, the "daddy" of them all, although not a trainer in the

true sense of the word he introduced the caged man and wild animal to the circus in the United States. Col. Edgar Daniel Boone, who worked the first steel arena trained wild animal act on the Great Forepaugh show in 1891. Frank C. Bostock and Jack Bonavita, although not really circus performers, they did work the finest trained wild animal acts in tents in America at the turn of the century.

In the 1910s two men stood out, Louis Roth, head trainer on the Al G. Barnes Circus and Peter Taylor, one of the top lion men of all time.

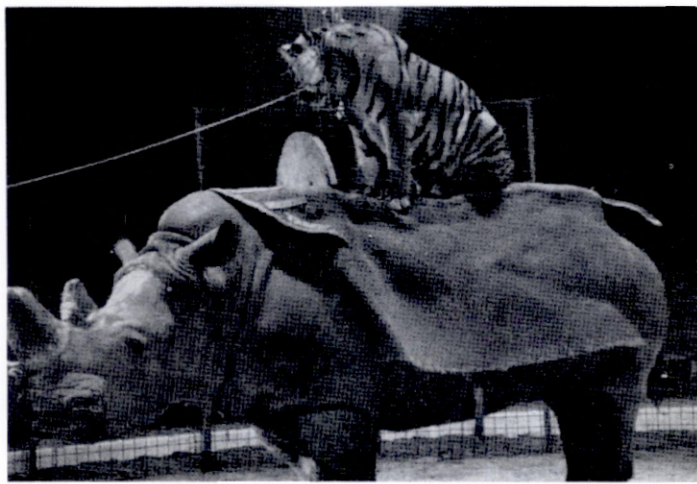
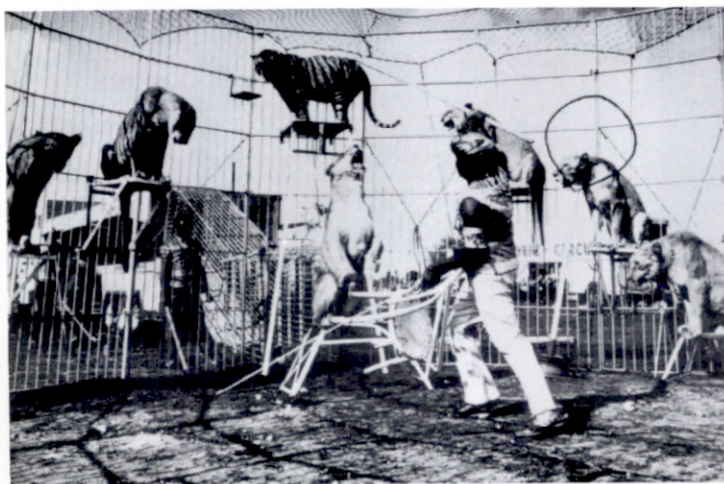
In the 1920s there were many trainers with great ability who worked out of the Peru winter quarters of the American Circus Corporation, all of which contributed to the careers of two young men that started with the corporation shows. Those two are Terrell Jacobs, generally acknowledged to have handled more lions and tigers in a single arena than any other man and the immortal Clyde Beatty, who had more showmanship in the arena than all others. Alfred Court, a master trainer of animals and other trainers.

We have mentioned a surprising number of women, but most only worked small acts broken and trained by men. Of these we would select only two, Lucia Zora, who broke her own acts and was the first featured female trainer, and of course Mable Stark, one of the most talented tiger trainers, man or woman.

For further reading we suggest the following books: *The Big Cage*, by Clude Beatty; *The Training of Wild Animals*, by Frank C. Bostock; *My Life with the Big Cats*, by Alfred Court; *Sawdust and Solitude*, by Lucia Zora; *Hold That Tiger*, by Mable Stark; *Lions, Tigers and Me*, by Roman Proske and *Wild Animal Man*, by Reuban Castang and R. W. Thompson.

Thanks to the following for help and information, Richard Flint, Don F. Smith, Joe McKennon and P. M. McClintock.

This photo of a tiger riding a rhino is an indication of what may be seen in the United States in future years. The act was broken by Fredy Knie, of the Swiss Circus Knie. Photo from Echo.



Famous Circus Landmarks

The Cole Bros. Winterquarters at Rochester, Indiana

By JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

Foreword: Circus activity at the former Cole Bros. Circus quarters in Rochester, Indiana lasted a short five years, 1935-40, in marked contrast to other famous locales such as Baraboo, Bridgeport, Macon, and Sarasota which were in the circus lime-light for a quarter of a century or longer. Just 25 miles from Rochester was the famed Peru quarters in which circuses wintered for almost 50 years. However, during the few years Rochester was the home of the Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell owned shows the eyes of the circus world were upon it and a lot of circus history was made.

Coming into prominence suddenly and dramatically in the winter of 1934-35 when a brand new 35 railroad car circus was framed from the ground up in a matter of months in Rochester the quarters likewise passed into oblivion in much the same manner a scant five years later when in 1940 the major portion was leveled by a disastrous fire.

I told the story of the Adkins and Terrell

Photo No. 2 - This photo showing an elephant at the loading runs at Cole Bros. Rochester quarters was taken in 1939. The show loaded and unloaded and rail cars were stored on the two sidings pictured here. The main line of the north-south Nickle Plate Railroad was immediately to the right of the string of sleepers. On the left shows the rear of the menagerie building which was the eastmost structure in the main building complex. In the rear a stock car is seen on the siding that ran off to the left and into the rail car shop building which was adjacent to the menagerie. Pfening collection.

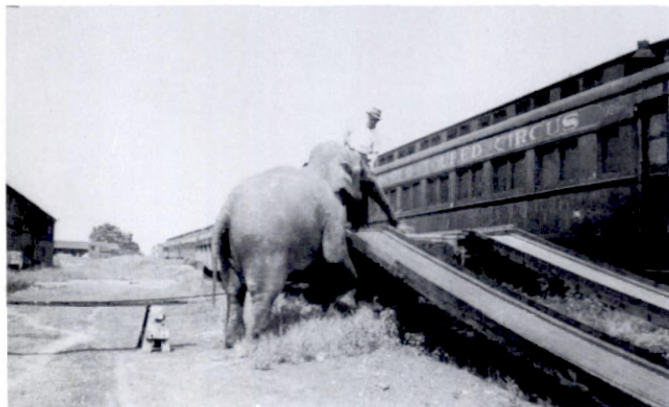


Photo No. 1 - Sign posted on incoming highway near Rochester, Ind. advertising the "Home of Cole Bros. Circus". This photo was taken in the fall of 1938. Terrell Jacobs later got this sign and had it at his quarters in Peru, Ind. in the early 1940's. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)

Cole Bros. Circus seasons 1935 thru 1940 in a lengthy, highly detailed, and profusely illustrated article which consumed some 13 installments beginning in the May-June 1965 Bandwagon and concluding in the Nov-Dec 1967 issue. It was announced that a separate article covering the Rochester quarters would follow shortly thereafter as one of the Famous

Circus Landmarks series. Historical details contained in the article will not be repeated here nor will any of the considerable photos of the quarters used then. Many of these back issues may be obtained from the editor.

One of the first orders of business in the fall of 1934 for the newly organized Indiana Circus Corporation was to establish an adequate winterquarters for the major railroad circus it planned to frame during the coming winter and place on the road for the 1935 season.

On the board of directors was A. C. Bradley, a prominent businessman and resident of Rochester, Indiana (population then about 3000) and it was mainly through his contacts and efforts that the necessary real estate, buildings, and rail facilities were promptly secured there in Rochester. The location was ideal, being only 25 miles northeast from Peru, and situated adjacent to two major rail lines. Since Jess Adkins, manager of the 1934 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus which wintered in Peru, also had a home in Peru as well as other key people he planned to take with him to the new show, including Clyde Beatty, it was hoped quarters could

Photo No. 3 - This photo taken in fall of 1938 shows No. 64, drop frame concession wagon, parked beside the rear portion of the eastmost building of the main complex. Note front part is two story and was used for the dining hall with bunkhouse upstairs. Single story rear portion contained the menagerie with permanent cages on the east side and elephant line on right. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)





Photo No. 1A - One of the earliest photos of the Rochester quarters was this Harry Atwell shot taken in early 1935. Note the newly painted sign "Indiana Circus Corporation" over the two westmost buildings of the main complex. Baggage stock are being watered in the foreground while in back is a baggage wagon from either the Christy Bros. or Robbins Bros. Circus. Pfening collection.

be established in the general vicinity of Peru and thereby not necessitate a general uprooting of closely established ties with one of the major centers of circusdom in the country. Adkins also had hoped to be able to acquire some of the vast amount of surplus circus property stored at Peru but the Ringling owners were cool to this idea and would sell Adkins nothing. Arnold Maley, who was on the scene from the beginning, said the Ringling management was constantly accusing the new show of unauthorized acquisition of some of their property and would come around ever so often to recover the alledged missing items but they could never find anything.

Selected as the quarters where Jess Adkins, Zack Terrell, and their associates' new show would be framed and consequently wintered was the site and buildings of the Rochester Bridge Co. located at the north edge of Rochester where the north-south Nickle Plate Railroad and the east-west Erie Railroad crossed. The site was bordered on the east by the Nickle Plate and on the south by the Erie. It was about two blocks east of U.S. Highway 31. The buildings had been erected about 1907 and although the bridge company had not been in operation for several years generally all structures were in fairly good shape. The

Photo No. 6 - East portion of the huge wagon shed at Rochester quarters which was built in the fall of 1936. On the right are the two main sidings used to store the rail cars and a third siding (not clearly visible) ran at an angle to left of the main sidings ending up inside the railroad car shop building. This photo was taken in the spring of 1938. Al Conover Collection.

real estate was adequate. The total acreage was about eight to ten and although compared to quarters such as Peru or Sarasota it was quite small but there was room for any additional buildings the new show might want to erect in the future and ample open space for storage of wagons or other properties.

The Rochester Bridge Co. consisted of four structures. There was a two story brick building which had been the office located only a short distance from the place the two rail lines crossed. The other buildings were situated a few hundred feet to the north on a connecting roadway. These buildings faced the east-west Erie line and were bordered on the east by the Nickle Plate tracks.

Two of these buildings were identical and formed a dual complex. They were approximately 60 ft. wide and 250 ft. long of brick construction on the fronts and sides and wood in the rear. Both had triangular shaped roofs. Located about 60 ft. to the right (east) was a separate third building which had served as the

Photo No. 2A - View of front of the main building complex of the Rochester Quarters. During the first months of use by Cole Bros. a siding upon which a former Christy Bros. sleeper is parked ran off the Nickle Plate R. R. and thru the open space between the two westmost buildings and the east building and extended on for a short distance as shown here. Later the siding was stubbed off at the rear of the buildings. When the new rail car shop was built in the open space between the buildings it was extended through it so cars could be repaired and painted inside. Note the cage still bearing the Christy Bros. title and trademark, "The Wonder Show". Pfening collection.

foundry for the former bridge company. It was 60 ft. wide and 180 ft. long. The front portion was two story and of brick construction while the rear part was one story, wooden construction with numerous windows allowing plenty of sunlight.

Two rail sidings were erected just to the right of the third building in the main



Photo No. 5 - West portion of the huge wagon shed at Rochester quarters in the spring of 1938. A line of baggage wagons

already loaded and ready for the road are parked in the open in front of the shed. Al Conover Collection.





complex and paralleled the Nickle Plate main line. A third siding, possibly already in place serving the old bridge company, came off the Nickle Plate main some distance to the rear and angled over and ran to a spot just to rear of the open space between the dual building and the foundry. Sidings were fully adequate to hold the rail cars soon to be acquired.

When the Rochester Bridge Co. was in operation the siding extended on thru the space between the two westmost and the eastmost building and a short distance in front of the buildings. In the very early days of the Cole quarters they used this part of the siding which extended to the front of the buildings but later it was terminated at rear of the building complex.

A huge new sign was painted across the top front of the dual buildings reading "Indiana Circus Corporation". Title for the new show had not as yet been definitely selected.

By early November 1934 Messers Jess Adkins, Zack Terrell, Jess Murden, A. C. Bradley and others who comprised the Indiana Circus Corporation were in business, had their winterquarters, and were ready to go at the almost impossible task of assembling from scratch a brand new railroad circus which would take to

Photo No. 3A - Front of the main building complex showing the newly built rail car shop which joined the other buildings creating a solid front. This photo was taken about 1937. Pfening collection.

Photo No. 4 - Four coaches of the former Buchanan Robbins Bros. Circus were placed two abreast at the Rochester quarters and were used to store seats and poles. All activities of these departments took place here until the large two story barn was built in fall of 1937. Afterwards the old coaches were used to store surplus properties. This photo was taken in the fall of 1938. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)

the road in the spring of 1935. Railroad cars, wagons, and other equipment came from the residue of the former Christy Bros., Robbins Bros. (Fred Buchanan), and 101 Ranch Wild West Shows. Initial plans to frame two shows were changed and it was decided to concentrate on a single, large 35 car railer which would rank only behind the 90 car Ringling-Barnum Circus by time the 1935 season rolled around. Title for the new show, suggested by general agent Floyd King, became Cole Bros. - Clyde Beatty Combined Circus.

To accomplish this task would have been a monumental chore even at established quarters such as Peru or Sarasota where blacksmith, carpenter, paint, and rail shops were already in existence but to do it at a site with only four vacant buildings, some acreage, and a few side tracks make the task seem only that much more difficult and the fact it was done is nothing short of remarkable.

A general overall plan of development for the quarters was made but it would

take time and for the initial winter things by would be rather helter skelter. All rail car repair and painting would have to be done outside as no indoor shop facilities were available and the men assigned to that department had to brave the chilly elements during the winter.

Offices were established on the first floor of the former bridge company office building and a bunkhouse was put upstairs. Initially a cookhouse was located in this building but later it was moved to the first floor in the front part of the old foundry building and likewise the bunkhouse was moved and put on the second floor. The wardrobe department then occupied the upstairs of the office building. The rear portion of the foundry building was to house the menagerie with built in permanent cages running inside along the east walls and the elephant line was put on the opposite side. A steel arena could be set up in the center area. However, that first winter it was necessary to arrange quarters for the elephants and lead stock elsewhere so a site was acquired (no doubt rented) at the Chicago Nipple Co. about a quarter of a mile away. Also that first winter some wagon repair and painting took place there. Some who were present during the winter of 1934-35 say that another location in town was used for the wardrobe department in the very early weeks before it was permanently installed in the upstairs of the office building.

The dual building on the main quarters was utilized as follows. The building on the right was used as the general shop area with primary work done on the wagons. In front was the paint shop and in rear the blacksmith and carpenter shops. The building on the left housed the properties, harness, and trappings departments in the front end and in the rear the ring horses were quartered and a large training ring was set up.

Four of the former Buchanan Robbins

Photo No. 4A - Huge crowd of winter-quarters visitors witness trained elephant act in outdoor ring in front of the main building complex about 1937. Note quarters sign has been changed to read, "Cole Bros. - Clyde Beatty Circus Winter Quarters". Pfening collection.





Photo No. 6A - No. 81 parked under the wagon shed at Rochester quarters in 1937 was the former Fred Buchanan Robbins Bros. ticket wagon and some believe was originally on the Buffalo Bill Show. Although it was fixed up, painted,



and numbered it was never carried on the road by Cole Bros. It was planned to use it to carry an electric organ and public address system on the road in 1937 but plans were cancelled and wagon never left the shed. Pfening collection.

Photo No. 5A - Cole Bros. baggage stock on the show's farm at Argus, Indiana, March 23, 1937. The farm was about two miles from the main quarters. Pfening collection.

Bros. coaches which were considered too obsolete and not worth the expense to make them road worthy were removed from their wheel trucks and set up two abreast a short distance behind the foundry building and adjacent to the sidings. These cars were used for storage of seats and poles and all activities pertaining to these departments took place in this area.

Baggage stock were quartered and pastured at A. C. Bradley's farm about two miles away at Argus. Existing buildings at the farm were used until later improvements could be made. Baggage stock were kept at this farm each winter and would only be brought to the main quarters at the time for loading out each spring.

The numerous baggage, tableau, and cage wagons acquired by the show were parked around the grounds at quarters. As the finer parade wagons were repaired and painted for the road they too had to leave the shops and go outside as inside storage space was extremely critical especially during that first winter and spring, in fact adequate under cover storage for vehicles would not become available until the fall of 1936.

First real work on the buildings began after the show left for the road in the spring of 1935. Cage blocks for 60 animals were completed and floor rings for 35 elephants were constructed in the menagerie building. A tunnel runway from the cages to the 40 ft. steel arena in the center of the building was also constructed. Prior to this a temporary arena had been used and often times when weather permitted it was set up outside in rear of the building. By time the show returned to Rochester in the fall of 1935 the menagerie building was completed and the elephants were brought here. The old site at the Chicago Nipple Co. was closed. All shop activities were now at the main quarters. Although a lot of general repair work and improvements had been made no major construction at

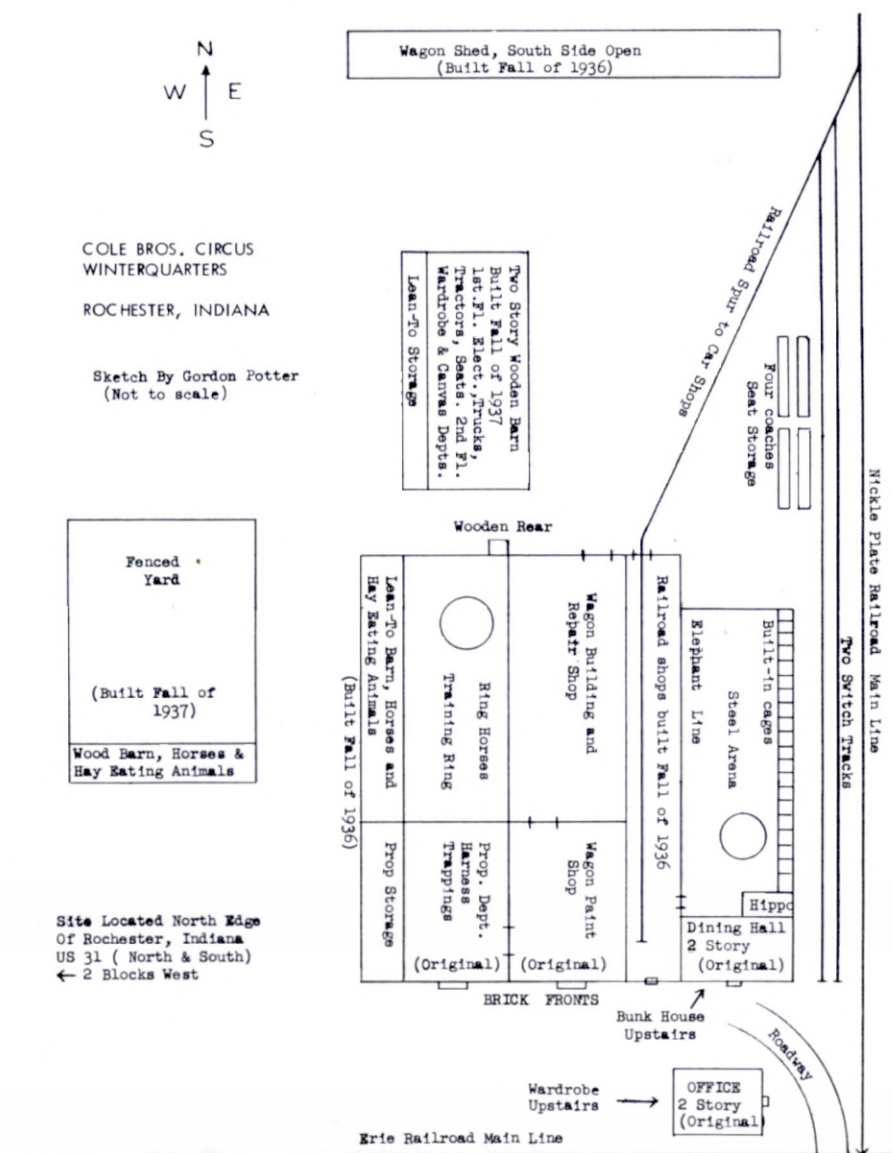




Photo No. 7 - Closeup view of the west side of the wagon shed at Rochester quarters in 1938. Note depth of shed could accomodate two rows of wagons. Wagon at extreme left is No. 70 Palm Tree Tableau. Pfening Collection.

the quarters had taken place. Although new rail car shop facilities were sorely needed as was inside wagon storage the new show had very limited funds due in part to a rather light overall take during the 1935 season. Business which was extremely good the first few weeks slacked off and by early August the show found the going quite rough and it was necessary to retrench and lower the nut, consequently five cars were eliminated from the train and sent back to quarters and the performance revised. However the winter of 1935-36 found the Rochester quarters fully organized with space adequate for most departments. That winter major rebuilding of the wagons took place so that by opening day of the 1936 season all rolling stock was in excellent condition. A new sign "Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus Winter Quarters replaced the old Indiana Circus Corporation.

The excellent business encountered by the Cole show during its late summer and fall tour of the mountain states and Pacific coast in 1936 provided the funds and several new improvements were made at the quarters. The first project begun in the fall of 1936 and completed on Jan. 15, 1937 was the construction of a new building which bridged the 60 ft. gap between the dual building and the old foundry. Brick was used in the front and wood in the rear in manner of the other structures. The roof was triangular. This new building now made a solid flush complex which housed the major activities of the quarters. The rail siding which had ended immediately in back was extended the length of the new building which became the rail car repair and paint shops. The indoor track could accommodate three or four cars at a time and this was a big improvement as before all rail car work had been done outside.

A second project completed in the fall of 1936 by Charlie Luckie and his crew was the construction of a new 60 x 300 ft. wagon storage shed which was erected over a hundred yards north of the main buildings, facing the rear of these and running parallel with them. The new shed could now house all of the tableau, cages, and most of the baggage wagons. It was a wooden three sided shed open

on the side next to the main buildings.

A third project completed in the fall of 1936 consisted of a 20 ft. lean-to type shed built on the left of the westmost building in the main complex. Front section was used as additional properties storage area and rear for ring horses and other hay eating animals.

The building housing the elephants and caged animals was resealed and a badly needed new heating system was installed. Huge signs were erected on all main highways leading into town reading "Rochester, Home of Cole Bros. Circus" and calling attention that the quarters were open to the public on Sundays when the show was in town. (In later years they were open daily).

At the show's farm at Argus, Indiana a new 84x250 wooden barn for baggage stock was constructed and the old barn remodeled so that it could accommodate camels, zebras, water buffalo and other lead stock.

All of these new improvements proved to be of great value during the winter of 1936-37 as messers Adkins and Terrell, cheered with the good business generated during the latter half of the 1936 season, decided to enlarge the Cole show to 40 cars for the 1937 tour. This necessitated the acquisition of new railroad cars and the renovation of old ones not used since 1935 and also the building of new cages and baggage wagons as well as pressing into service others from the original pool of vehicles acquired in the beginning.

The early spring of 1937 was indeed a fun place for circus fans living in the area or visiting. After spending some time at Rochester they could then go over to Peru where Howard Y. Bary was readying

Photo No. 8 - Looking east from the wagon shed in a photo taken in 1938. Stock cars are parked on the two sidings in rear. Pfening Collection.



Hagenbeck-Wallace for the road after a year's layoff.

While the Cole show was on the road during the 1937 season a large 150 x 300 ft. barn type wooden building was constructed at quarters by Jack Biggers and his crew of 20 men. This two story structure was located in the area behind the westmost building in the main complex and the wagon shed. The first floor was used for the electrical, tractor, truck, and seat departments while the second was used for wardrobe and a sail loft and all activities of the canvas department took place here. Heretofore, the canvas dept. had occupied rather cramped quarters in the main complex. A lean-to storage shed was built on the west side of the new building to store miscellaneous properties.

A second project completed in the fall of 1937 was indoor and outdoor corrals for hay eating animals. This was built to the left of the westmost building of the complex and consisted of a wooden shed type structure and a large fenced in yard. Adequate space was now available at the main quarters for all animals with exception of the baggage stock which remained at the farm at Argus.



Photo No. 7A - After the quarters in Rochester were closed the remaining wagons were moved to Bradley farm a few miles from town. The old Buchanan Robbins Bros. ticket wagon is shown here at the farm about 1946. This wagon is currently at the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Pfening collection.

The winter of 1937-38 was one of feverish activities at Rochester. It was decided to cut down the large 40 car show to 30 for the 1938 season and to use the surplus equipment as a nucleus for framing a second railroad show, a 15 car circus to be titled Robbins Bros. Efforts to obtain the John Robinson title from the Ringling interest proved futile so Robbins Bros. was chosen instead. Even though only five additional railroad cars had to be acquired to accomplish the framing of the second show and new wagon construction was at a minimum it still meant there had to be a duplication of all show properties, canvas, seats, cookhouse, menagerie, advance, staff, performance, the works. The second show was given a new color scheme with bag-

gage wagons painted orange instead of the red used for Cole Bros.

Early spring 1938 was again an exciting time in Rochester as Cole Bros. with Zack Terrell as road manager and Robbins Bros. with Jess Adkins as road manager departed the quarters on their season tours.

The disastrous 1938 season was told in detail in the article mentioned in the foreword. Cole closed in August and although Robbins Bros. was enlarged to 20 cars after Cole's failure, it still was not able to recover the earlier losses and by end of the year both operating companies as well as the parent Indiana Circus Corporation were bankrupt.

It was touch and go for many weeks during the winter of 1938-39 and activity was at a minimum until efforts for a reorganization were successful and a 20 car Cole Bros. Circus was put into shape to go out for the 1939 season.

Although the 1939 season was not a great winner at least the show broke even and was able to meet its financial obligations. With brighter economic conditions in sight it was hoped there would be better days in 1940. Routine activities began at quarters as usual but on the early evening of Feb. 20, 1940 disaster struck.

While the show's employees were at supper, fire, believed to have originated in the paint shop, spread rapidly and fanned by a stiff 40 miles per hour wind soon engulfed the entire main building complex. Only through fast work and heroics of the quarters crew it would have been a total loss. Nine of the 11 elephants (5 were away with the winter unit) were gotten out safely. Ring stock, ponies, and some lead stock were also saved but all caged animals perished, including the pygmy hippo.

Fortunately, the fire was confined to the main complex and did not spread to the other structures or to the rail cars parked on the adjacent sidings. Only those wagons which were inside the repair and paint shops were lost but these were numerous. Biggest vehicular loss were the tableau wagons used in the 1939 parade. These included the United States, Great Britain, Africa (also called India or hippo), Belgium, corner statue tableau (ex Barnum & Bailey tableau den),



Photo No. 8A - This photo taken at 7:10 P.M., Tues. Feb. 20, 1940 shows the Rochester quarters fire about 40 minutes after its discovery. Pfening collection.

and the Palm Tree tableau wagons. Also destroyed were the rubber tired Springfield built cage, pugmy hippo den, seal den, a cross cage, two of the 12 ft. dens built in 1937, five of the former Christy 12 ft. cages, the red ticket wagon (former Christy), the new 1939 steam calliope wagon, two Mack trucks, and all of the trucks used on the advance.

Detailed list of animals lost included two elephants, Ding and Katie, 2 zebras, 2 llamas, monkeys, 2 tigers, 2 lions, 2 lionesses plus a couple of cubs, 2 leopards, a sacred Indian cow, 2 audads, and a pygmy hippo. Total damage loss to the show due to the fire was estimated at \$150,000.00.

An interesting account of the fire comes from Jack Kofron, retired circus troupier now living in Orange City, Fla., who was an eyewitness to the tragic events of Feb. 20, 1940. He writes as follows:

"I wasn't connected with the Cole show at the time of the fire. I had the band on the Bud Anderson Circus during the 1939

season, and when we closed I came to Rochester for the winter.

"I was staying at the Hertha Grabers boarding house as were quite a few of the Cole show people. (The boarding house is no longer there). The fire started just at supper time and the men at the quarters were also at supper when the fire siren sounded. By the time we got there the fire was beyond control as part of the buildings was wooden and they were quite old. It was bitter cold and a northeast wind was blowing strongly as the fire started. The fire had started at that end of the building and the wind was just blowing the flames further into the interior.

As to how the fire started I don't think anyone really knew. The people I talked to, some say it was from a welding torch, others think it was from an overheated stove as they had several 50 gallon drums converted into heating stoves. Whatever started it, it was a horrible thing to see and I shall never forget the screams of the animals and the neighing of the horses and ponies. The two elephants lost in the fire were a pitiful sight and one can hardly imagine that an animal could produce such horrible sounds. The hippo was almost out of danger as men tried to drive her out and they almost succeeded when all of a sudden she whirled and went back into her water tank and by that time the water was almost to a boiling point and that was the end of the hippo.

"They cut all the horses and ponies

Photo No. 9A - Aftermath of the fire that destroyed the main building complex of the Rochester quarters. This photo was taken the next morning, Feb. 21, 1940, from the front showing the total effect of the tragic fire. Pfening collection.





Photo No. 10A - View of the rear of the main quarters complex the next morning after the fire, Feb. 21, 1940. Pfening Collection.

loose and drove them out and they scattered into all directions. There were elephants and horses running through streets and alleys and it was several days before they got them all corraled and when they did they were taken to the old Peru winterquarters.

"As for the cages that were lost it was almost impossible to get to them for the smoke and heat and with the 40 mile an hour wind blowing it right through the entire building. If they had had more men they could have saved more cages and animals. There were some men who panicked and didn't know what to do and some were scared to death and wouldn't go near the animals. I'll admit it was dangerous from all angles but I think if John Smith and Alabama Campbell had been there they would have saved quite a few more animals. I believe they were with the menagerie acts out on the winter dates at the time.

"The show was fortunate by having a long shed in the back almost a block away where they stored many wagons. If they

Photo No. 12A - Remains of the pigmy hippo which perished inside it's tank in the menagerie building during the Rochester quarters fire. This photo was taken the morning following the fire. Pfening collection.



had been in the main building all would have been destroyed. Fortunately the office building and large two story wooden barn were spared.

"After the fire the repair work that spring on the vehicles and properties was done out in the open and in sidewalled areas".

The first few days after the fire were agonizing as the cleanup began and the future of the show highly in doubt. John Ringling North made the Peru quarters available for the housing of elephants and other animals as well as the use of storage sheds and shop equipment. When it became evident the Cole show would be able to go out for the 1940 season North sold them a few baggage wagons, cages, and animals. Certain agreements with North over routing of the Cole show in 1940 were given in return for aid rendered. Repair and paint work however were done in makeshift areas at Rochester reminiscent of the early days in the winter of 1934-35.

The 1940 Cole show, despite the difficulties of the fire, was actually enlarged over the 1939 version, and rolled out of Rochester that spring on 25 cars. Although enough parade equipment survived the fire it was decided not to parade in 1940, but when the train pulled out loaded on the flats were the Columbia tableau used for the reserved seat ticket wagon, two pony floats, Mother Goose, an Old Woman in Shoe, and the America tableau which had been converted to house the steam calliope instrument



Photo No. 11A - Trucks and cages inside the quarters building at time of the fire looked like this the following morning. The show lost practically all of it's motor vehicles. Pfening collection.

which had been salvaged from the fire and later renovated. Those wagons not utilized in 1940 were left stored in the wagon shed or about the quarter's grounds.

At the conclusion of the 1940 season Cole Bros. went into new quarters at the state fairgrounds in Louisville, Kentucky and never again was any show wintered at Rochester. The burned out buildings were leveled off. The office building, wagon shed, and two story wooden building were undamaged by the fire and remained intact. Title to the property had previously been lost by the show in the bankruptcy and it was held by a trustee.

Don Smith visited Rochester in December 1941 and found the remains of several old wagons out in the opening and others still stored under the shed. The old Robbins Bros. (1931) sleepers used for the pole and seat departments in the

Photo No. 13A - Ruins of the eastmost building of the main complex following the fire which destroyed the Rochester quarters the night of Feb 20, 1940. This photo was taken from top of a string of flat cars parked on a siding next to the building but were not damaged by the fire. Pfening collection.





Photo No. 11 - Shortly after the fire the wreckage of the destroyed buildings was cleared away and the show got ready for the 1940 season in makeshift facilities. This photo was taken a few weeks before the season began. Repair and painting is being done on the wagons on the left and on the rail cars in center and right of photo. This is the siding that went into the rail car shop building which was destroyed in the fire. Note the large two story barn and wagon shed in rear which were not damaged. Don F. Smith Collection.

beginning had been scrapped and all remaining railroad cars were now gone. In time all sidings were removed.

In the intervening years the old office building was used as a photo processing laboratory for the Lockeridge Studio and later for storage by Lyman Baker Plumbing and Heating Co. In 1942 the entire site and buildings were purchased by the McMahan Construction Co. All wagons remaining in the shed were moved to A. C. Bradley's farm and the shed later demolished. The remains of the old Christy steam calliope which had been pretty well stripped of carvings when the 1939 steamer wagon was built was sold to Alex Clarke and the Russia tableau which had come with the Buchanan Robbins Bros. equipment but never used by Cole was sold to Terrell Jacobs who moved it to his quarters in Peru. Wagons going to Bradley farm included the Lion and Mirror bandwagon, Asia tableau, France tab, the air calliope used by Cole in 1939 (ex Buchanan Robbins Bros.) and about eight baggage wagons.

In 1946 the Lion and Mirror, Asia, and France wagons were acquired by Block and Kuhl Department store of Peoria, Ill. and moved to that city where they were restored and used in the annual Thanksgiving parades.

In June 1950 I visited the old Rochester quarters which was occupied by McMahan Construction Co. The office building and the two story wooden building were there but the wagon shed was gone and no remains of wagons could be found anywhere on the grounds. Only thing that remotely suggested a circus ever wintered there was a section of permanent type

cage which had evidently been used in one of the outside sheds. Possibly it was built after the fire. Next I drove to the Bradley farm which was about 3 miles north of the quarters, a few hundred yards off Indiana 25. In a big pasture I spotted the last remaining wagons of the Cole show when it wintered in Rochester. I climbed the fence and walked into the pasture populated by numerous hogs to record and photograph what I had seen. Wagons in condition of fair to foul included No. 28, hippo den, and the following baggage wagons all with the Cole title; No. 61, 96, 31, 107 (stringers), 99 (ring curbs), No. 79, and an unnumbered vehicle. Also there was No. 88 with the Robbins Bros. title, a total of 9 wagons in all. At the farm house the wagon body of No. 75, air calliope (ex Buchanan Robbins Bros.) was sitting near a shed minus wheels and gear and currently being used as a coal bin. The sight of these old wagons was heartrendering that day but fortunately all of these derelics have now been rescued by the Circus World Museum. To date No. 28, hippo den, and No. 75, air calliope, have been restored to their former glory and I understand in time the others will be.

On August 12, 1965 Fred Pfening Jr. visited the old Rochester quarters site and photographed the office building and two story barn, both in use by McMahan and looking much the same as they had when Cole Bros. wintered there.

The Jan. 6, 1967 issue of the South Bend, Ind. Tribune contained a short notice that the old office building used by Cole Bros. at Rochester was being demolished and would be replaced by a smaller one story structure. McMahan still owned the place and now only the two story barn remained that had been there when it was the Cole Bros. winter-quarters.

Strangely enough the wagons and property of the Cole show that had pulled out from Rochester for the last time in the spring of 1940 eventually ended up at the Kelly property in nearby Peru, having come there after the show made its last tour in 1950.

To get a glimpse at the current (1972) situation at the old Rochester quarters, at my request CHS members Chalmer



Photo No. 12 - It wasn't long after Cole Bros. moved its quarters to Louisville, Ky. following the 1940 season that all traces of the circus at Rochester soon faded away. This photo taken in December 1941 shows the remains of four old Cole wagons at the Rochester site. These soon were cleared away. Note seal den third from left. Photo by Don F. Smith.

Condon and Charles M. Terry, both of Logansport, Ind., made a trip to Rochester to look in at the old quarters site. While in Rochester they also visited the offices of the county auditor, recorder, and surveyor in the court house to check what records might be available. They came up with some very valuable information gathered on a very cold February 7, 1972 when they braved near zero weather to make the trip.

Their report on the current condition at the old quarters is as follows:

Photo No. 14A - Ruins of the steam calliope which was inside the main building complex at time of the Rochester quarters fire, Feb. 20, 1940. Despite the damage the whistles and mechanism of the steam calliope were repaired and placed in the America tableau wagon and carried on the road by Cole Bros. during the 1940 season. The America steam calliope is still in operating condition and is at the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Pfening collection.

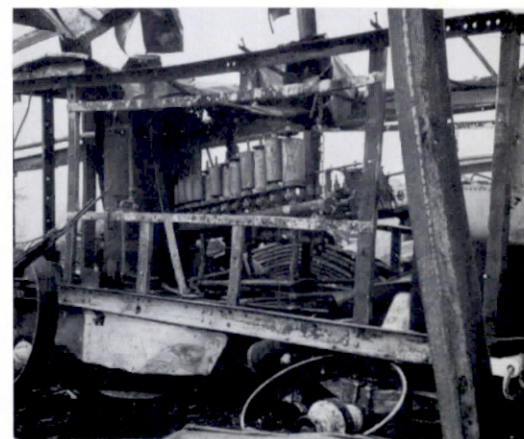




Photo No. 14 - Last remaining trace of the old Cole Bros. quarters in Rochester, Ind. is this large two story barn which was built in the fall of 1937. Note the storage shed built on left. This photo taken Aug. 12, 1965 shows the building occupied by the McMahan Construction Co. It was still standing and appearance has remained unchanged in February 1972. Photo by Fred D. Pfening Jr.

"Only one wall of the brick office is standing. It provides the one side of a shed. The big white frame barn still stands unchanged from its circus days. McMahan Construction Co. occupies the site and the grounds are full of road building equipment.

"The main lines of the Nickel Plate and Erie railroads still cross near the southeast corner of the site. The entrance to the old quarters was near this corner over a rather dangerous crossing of the

Erie Railroad.

"Records we found at the court house show the following:

"Rochester Bridge Co. deeded Oct. 16, 1934 to the Cole Bros. Greatest Shows, Lot 21, value of land \$260.00 - Improvements \$500.00; Lot 22, value of land \$50.00 - Improvements - ; Lot 23, value of land \$260.00 - Improvements \$500.00; Small track of Danzingers out lot 22; 31 Michigan Road land - \$50.00.

"The surveyor's office shows Lot 21 - 1.78 acres; Lot 22 - 1.47 acres, and Lot 23 - 1.47 acres.

"We couldn't find the acreage of the rest but the men in the surveyor's office (and we also) think the total would be only 8 to 10 acres. It was a very compact quarters.

"Corrections in the transfer books change the name on the deed to the Indiana Circus Corporation. This correction was made Feb. 11, 1938 and pencil notations say this should have been the name used in the first place. Valuations change improvements on Lot 21 to \$2500.00 and Lot 23 to \$1000.00.

"The transfer books show the property deeded to McMahon Construction Co. from Oron M. Hendrickson, trustee, Russel Voorhees, Sherriff, formerly Indiana Circus Corporation on Sept. 17, 1942."

Condon and Terry recall that the show grounds used by Cole Bros. on opening days was at the opposite (South) side of town and they also recall how it did rain on some of the opening days. They conclude their report by mentioning, "there



Photo No. 13 - Two story brick building used as the office at the Cole Bros. winterquarters at Rochester, Ind. This photo taken Aug. 12, 1965 was one of last before it was torn down in 1967. Note the crossing in foreground of the Nickel Plate and Erie railroads. The large two story barn built by the show in fall of 1937 can be seen in the left background. Photo by Fred D. Pfening Jr.

are still several people that were in some way or another a part of the Cole Bros. Circus living in Rochester. To them these years the show wintered there are still vivid but it is mostly forgotten by the public. There is no evidence of it anywhere."

My thanks go to Chalmer Condon and Charles M. Terry for their help with this article and I also appreciate the assistance rendered by Don Smith, Gordon Potter, and Fred Pfening Jr.



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THE SHEET ANCHOR FAILED

By Sverre O. Braathen

When in the autumn of 1929 John Ringling purchased the properties of the American Circus Corporation to assure the opening of the Greatest Show on Earth in Madison Square Garden each spring, he borrowed close to \$2,000,000 from the Prudence Bond and Mortgage Company of New York City. He had discussed with various of his banking and financial associates and advisers the feasibility of setting up a corporation and selling shares of stock. He had been assured that there would be no difficulty in finding buyers. Given another year in which to consummate this plan Mr. Ringling would probably have succeeded. His purchase of the rival circuses was fated to coincide with the October crash of the stock market which burst the bubble of his dream with those of millions of other Americans and eventually involved most of the civilized world.

Circuses took their losses during the Great Depression as did virtually all business in this country. John Ringling's health failed. In 1932 he was unable to meet an interest payment to the Prudence Company. Mr. Samuel W. Gumpertz, who had explored almost every facet of show business and was conversant with the straits in which the Ringlings found themselves, organized Allied Owners, Inc. and New York Investors, Inc. These two corporations purchased John Ringling's note from the Prudence Company.

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus was incorporated in the State of Delaware, with the creditors receiving ten per cent of the stock issued. Mrs. Charles Ringling, Mrs. Richard Ringling (both widows) and Mr. John Ringling each held one-third of the balance of the shares. Mr. Ringling was elected president, but complete managerial powers were voted to Mr. Gumpertz. He continued as general manager through the 1937 season, proving most competent in this capacity, as testified to by Mrs. Charles Ringling in November, 1937. (*The Billboard*, November 20, 1937). He had an unerring judgement in gauging the desires of the public and met these demands with an abundance of splendid circus talent. At one time under his management the Ringling-Barnum Show presented more acrobats in a single display than other circuses could boast as their entire performing personnel. During the 1937 season all of these acrobats marched into the

big top to the tune of The Parade of The Wooden Soldiers and what a beautiful sight it was. The entire performance was laid out on this scale.

The Ringling brothers had an only sister, Ida, who married Henry W. North. She named the first born of her sons after her youngest brother, John Ringling, and her second son after his father. Both boys were steeped in circus lore and circus business from childhood. During the year following John Ringling's death his nephew and namesake entered into negotiations by which he succeeded in obtaining a loan of approximately \$800,000 from the Manufacturers Trust Company of New York. This enabled him to pay off the mortgage held by Allied Owners, Inc., and New York Investors, Inc. At the December annual meeting of the stockholders it was voted to leave vacant the office of president, and John Ringling North was elected Senior Vice President, with Carl Hathaway named as general manager to supplant Samuel Gumpertz. Once more the control of the Greatest Show On Earth was back in the hands of members of the Ringling family.

The 1937 season had been a most profitable one for all circuses in our nations, but clouds were showing nebulous on the horizons. One of these in the person of Ralph Whitehead cast an

ominous shadow across the Ringling-Barnum Circus in midseason. In June, 1937 he announced that after several weeks of negotiations he had succeeded in completely unionizing every department of The Greatest Show on Earth. All signed contracts with the American Federation of Actors that were to run for five years.

On April 8, 1938 the Ringling Show opened in Madison Square Garden. Mr. North announced that he would not be bound by the contract negotiated by Ralph Whitehead the previous summer. On Tuesday evening, April 12 the Circus discovered that its animal men, grooms, wardrobe employees, property men, and others had walked out. With the aid of all the executives and administrative staffs, performers, such employees as had refused to join the walk out, and of sympathetic spectators the show was given. Two days later the strike was settled by the New York Mediation Board, with the circus officials bowing to the terms of the union contract.

When the Circus arrived in Pittsburgh on June 6th Mr. North called a meeting of the entire personnel and addressed them thus:

"Members of all the departments of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, I am here to address you because your representative, Mr. Ralph Whitehead, has informed me that neither he nor you wish to have a 25% reduction in your wages. Well, to start with I will say in all honesty that it is without pleasure that I have asked you to take such a reduction in your wages, but I must add that necessity is often without pleasure.

"I am speaking to you as the representative of the management of this corporation. I am responsible for the welfare, success, and continuation of this organization to its Board of Directors and to its owners. The purpose of this enterprise, if perhaps some of you have never paused to analyze it, is to bring entertainment to a large cross section of the American public and by so doing to return to the corporation a fair profit. In order to accomplish this purpose, it is necessary to purchase large quantities of materials, employ many men and engage a large number of performers. The materials must be paid for, equipment repaired, replaced and maintained, and the employees, workmen and performers alike, fed and transported from one end of the country to the other. All of this as you all know, must and does

This is the handbill distributed by the Teamsters Union to laboring men and circus goers on the Ringling-Barnum Circus early in the 1938 season. Pfening Collection.

RINGLING BROTHERS and BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS IS UNFAIR! TO LABOR!

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Here Are The Wages Which Keep These People In Economic Bondage!

SEAT DEPT. \$12.00 PER WEEK
PROP MEN \$14.00 to \$16.00 PER WEEK
TRUCK DRIVERS \$22.00 PER WEEK
CAT DRIVERS \$22.00 PER WEEK
ANIMAL HANDLERS \$10.00 to \$14.00 PER WEEK
COWBOYS & GROOMS \$14.00 PER WEEK

REMEMBER - THIS IS THE WEEKLY SALARY - NOT DAILY PAY!

THESE PEOPLE ARE ALL ON CALL 24 HOURS DAILY . . . 7 DAYS PER WEEK
THEY AVERAGE 15 HOURS OF WORK DAILY!

THEY ARE NOT PROTECTED BY FEDERAL WAGE AND HOUR LAWS
THEY ARE NOT PROTECTED BY WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION
THEY HAVE NO HEALTH AND WELFARE PROTECTION
AND YOU CAN IMAGINE WHAT THEY WILL DRAW IN UNEMPLOYMENT
COMPENSATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

WHY DO THESE PEOPLE WORK FOR THESE WAGES?

BECAUSE THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO QUIT . . . THEY DO NOT HAVE
ENOUGH MONEY TO TAKE THEM HOME!!

Please Don't Help Perpetuate This Economic Bondage!

TEAMSTERS UNION · A F of L



Mrs. Charles Ringling is shown here talking to working men of the show, attempting to keep the show from closing in Scranton, Pa. Pfening Collection.

require expenditure of a great deal of money. You also must know that in good times the circus does big business and makes good money, but that should not seem unreasonable for that is its just due. In fact, up to this time the show has made sufficient money to winter it. There must be many of you here familiar with the old circuses expression that 'if a circus hasn't its profit by the first of July it very likely will go home without it.' The reason for this is a very simple one. Due to competition all the shows start out in the territory that seems the best for box office receipts and plays said territory as thoroughly as possible. Then naturally must come many weeks when receipts are far from consistent. In order to play good cities as the large ones on the west coast, it is necessary to pay high railroad charges and play many towns which the management knows in advance won't bring enough to offset the daily expenses. So even in normal times a show often considers itself fortunate to get back to quarters still holding the bank balance established way back in July.

"And these, gentlemen, are not normal good times.

"Last year you men received a raise in pay that, in some instances amounted to 100%. The circus paid that increase last year and has paid it so far this season. I now repeat that I receive no satisfaction from having to ask you to take a 25% reduction, save perhaps the satisfaction of knowing that at least for you here that want to work, I am, I hope assuring you of work with a fair living wage for the remainder of the season and if I receive your cooperation I believe this season will be as long as usual and I'd like to think that it might also mark a return to that old order of things around here when many of you who are still here were proud to be working men with The Greatest Show On Earth.

"I hope you will discuss this among yourselves and also with your Department Heads. Thank you for coming. Thank you for listening." (A printed copy of this speech is in Braathen collection).

On June 14 at Toledo, Ohio sixty-seven teamsters went on strike. Steve Finn, who was in charge of baggage stock on the show, asked to be relieved of his duties since he was unable to control his crew. With this development the show bought trucks and tractors to haul the wagons from and to the show train — the initial move in mechanizing the circus. It was in Toledo on this same stand that a large number of air hoses on the trains were cut, making it impossible to bring the cars to a stop once they were in motion. This resulted in a 4:45 o'clock matinee in Erie, Pennsylvania the next afternoon.

The pay cuts went into effect in Watertown, New York on June 18. Whitehead waited until the show played a strong union city to take action. The circus arrived in Scranton, Pennsylvania on June 22. Dan Hurley and Guy Magley of the American Federation of Actors there published an official notice of a membership meeting of all divisions of the circus to be held in the grandstand of the ball park at 5:30 o'clock that afternoon which was as follows:

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF MEMBERSHIP — ALL DIVISIONS

THIS IS TO NOTIFY ALL MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ACTORS PRESENTLY EMPLOYED ON THE RINGLING BROTHERS, BARNUM AND BAILEY COMBINED SHOWS THAT THERE WILL BE A GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING THIS AFTERNOON, JUNE 22, 1938, AT 5:30 P. M. (E. S. T.) IN THE GRANDSTAND OF THE BALL PARK GROUNDS. MR. RALPH WHITEHEAD, YOUR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, WILL ADDRESS THE MEETING

FRATELERNALLY YOURS,
Dan Hurley Guy Magley
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ACTORS.



The deserted midway of the Scranton showgrounds is shown in this Robert Good photo taken June 24, 1938.

Mr. North then posted the following notice:

TO ALL EMPLOYEES OF RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY COMBINED SHOWS, INC.

The management wishes to advise you that Mr. Arthur Hopper, the Advertising Manager of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows Inc., has just telegraphed us that all advertising agents, including himself, have accepted the twenty-five per cent wage reduction which became effective June 19, 1938, and all members of the Bill Posters Union with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. have requested Mr. Abernathy, the President of the Bill Posters Union, to ratify the twenty-five per cent wage reduction, which they have willingly accepted.

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY SHOWS, INC.

BY John Ringling North

(These notices are all in the Braathen Collection)

The meeting in the ball park resulted in a strike by the entire personnel of the circus. Four days of negotiations followed during which the performing personnel changed their positions and circulated petitions seeking to enable the circus to continue its route. These were signed by hundreds, but without the support of the crews of the various departments no performance was possible. (This petition is 10 or 12 feet long and is in the Braathen collection). Mr. North ordered the show to return to winterquarters in Florida.

Many of the nation's newspapers rallied to the support of the circus management. An editorial in the New York *Herald Tribune* read:

"A gentleman named Whitehead, who deems himself a labor leader, is responsible FOR ONE OF THE MOST STUPID AND UNPOPULAR BLUNDERS EVER COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF ORGANIZED LABOR. Thanks to his incitement

of the roustabouts against any consideration of a pay cut, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus has abandoned its tour of the country and is on its way to retirement in Sarasota, Fla. . . ."

William T. Evjue, editor and publisher of the Madison, Wisconsin, *Capital Times*, one of the leading and most powerful crusading liberal newspapers in our nation, had this to say:

"The fiasco which closed the Ringling Brothers' Circus was undoubtedly one of the most stupid and unpopular blunders that has been committed in the name of organized labor in many years. It was a prize boner in labor strategy — one that demonstrates how quickly labor can lose prestige through dumb and irresponsible leadership . . ."

There remained on tour at the time but one of the shows John Ringling had purchased from the American Circus Corporation just prior to the Great Depression, — the hybrid Al. G. Barnes-Sells Floto. It, too, was experiencing an apparent profitless season. After putting the Big One in winter-quarters, Mr. North reorganized the Barnes Show. He sent around twenty railroad cars, the Ringling cookhouse, big top (cut down to a four pole tent) many of the best performers together with the necessary employees to augment it. Merle Evans was assigned to direct the band. In all publicity material the Barnes, Sells Floto name was played down in small print, and in much larger type appeared the words, PRESNETING RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY STUPENDOUS NEW FEATURES. Herb Duval, the outstanding Ringling legal adjuster told us that when this new combination gave its first performance, at Redfield, South Dakota, on July 11, it was \$65,000. in the red. Theo Forstall, one of the foremost of circus, carnival and show treasurers and who was the treasurer of the Barnes show that year wrote us as follows:

"I do not recall that we (Barnes) were in the hole anything like 65 grand as you say Du Val told you. He was going by what Johnny North told him, I guess. We went up the West Coast on our usual route, and while business was quite a lot off from the usual take over that route, I do not recall that we ever had to send for money (probably would not have gotten it if we had) although of course we may have piled up some printing bills, etc. that were not yet paid off. After leaving Spokane and working east in Montana, Dakotas, etc. the business did take a nose dive, so much so that orders were given the general agent, who was Ben Austin, to route the show back to winterquarters at Baldwin Park, and he actually did have Ed. Maxwell, the contracting agent start to do so, but soon after the order was given, they decided for Barnes to pick up the

20 cars of the Ringling show and play out the Ringling route for the rest of the season, the gaff being that Barnes was not tied up with the AGVA like RBBB was. So we played a few more of the spots contracted for Barnes alone, then went onto the RBBB route about the middle of July . . ."

With the added Ringling Bros. equipment and personnel it was necessary for the Barnes-Floto Circus to travel on two trains. This presented great difficulties. In fact, two train shows had long been described by circus managers as bastard shows. During the first two weeks after this reorganization the circus was confronted with many late arrivals and with late matinees and very poor business. Mr. North asserted that during the first days it did not gross enough money to pay for the bread used in the cookhouse.

The American Federation of Actors devoted the front page of their house organ to the Ringling Barnum strike situation. Pfening Collection.

The Barnes-Floto Circus was scheduled to play several stands in Wisconsin after completing the South Dakota and Minnesota route. Before coming into Wisconsin there were a number of legal requirements that had to be taken care of. Herbert Duval, the legal adjuster on the show telephoned Mr. Braathen and asked him to come to Joliet, Illinois on July 24th to see him about all legal matters that had to be taken care of before the show could come into the State of Wisconsin. When the Tom Mix Circus played Neenah-Menasha, Wisconsin, on July 10th it had a blow down which resulted in a number of injuries and before the Mix Circus was out of the State of Wisconsin, Tom Mix as well as the circus were served with a number of summons. The Tom Mix Circus was owned by Tom Mix as an individual so that all summons against the Tom Mix Circus were defective and all actions started against Tom Mix personally were defective because the papers were not served on Tom Mix personally nor on any member of his family. Mr. D. E. Turney, the manager of the Mix Circus

REPORTER

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TRUTH ABOUT CIRCUS LOCKOUT

Gumpertz Says Mayor of Scranton Blames AFA Benefited Ringling Show

The effect of the union contract on the Ringling Bros. circus during its first year of operation was that "conditions of our show were much better than they had ever been before," says Samuel W. Gumpertz, who managed the Ringling show for five years, in a letter to Ralph Whitehead, AFA executive secretary. Gumpertz's letter follows:

My dear Mr. Whitehead: "In reply to yours wherein you want to know what the situation was last year after the Federation agreement had been signed, will say that the men certainly showed greater discipline. "I played the show 21 Sundays last year and not a complaint from the men. We had a much staidier class of men."

"Immediately after the agreement went into effect on June 1, 1937, the men who were with the show remained and we had very few exchanges of men which constantly occurred in previous years. The records will show that even though we had quite a number of bad days and long runs, we missed but one performance in the entire season."

"In conclusion, let me say that the conditions of our Show were much better than they had ever been before and everything went along peacefully and quietly and our equipment was well taken care of."

"The effect of a hard summer had less effect on our equipment than in any previous year that I know of. I think it was due to the loyalty of our men and the satisfied condition that they were in. On November 11, when the show pulled into Sarasota, the equipment was in perfect shape and I was very happy to leave the show in that condition."

"With kind wishes,

Sincerely,
S. W. Gumpertz

Mayor of Scranton Blames North for Closing of Show

The following letter was sent voluntarily by Mayor Fred J. Hueter of Scranton to the American Federation of Actors.

Gentlemen:

I want to take this opportunity to inform the Federation that as Mayor of the City of Scranton, together with the Director of Public Safety and the officials of my Police Department, we were present at all meetings held by the officials of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows and the officials of organized labor while they were in conference attempting to settle their differences and I wish to state at this time that every effort was made by Mr. Ralph Whitehead, the authorized executive, to bring about a satisfactory settlement but that John Ringling North would not compromise and hence the delay in bringing about the present result."

I also want you to know that I appreciate the efforts and cooperation of the men and the manner in which they conducted themselves on the circus grounds and around the City of Scranton and wish to extend my compliments to the men at this time for their cooperation."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) FRED J. HUETER,
Mayor of Scranton.

8 Scranton Labor Leaders Hold North Caused Lockout

[This memorandum signed by eight Scranton labor leaders who participated in the many efforts to effect a settlement with the Ringling management offers impartial testimony on the cause of the show's closing.]

Mr. Ralph Whitehead, Executive Secretary of the union, stated at the first meeting on Wednesday, June 22nd, 1938, "The American Federation of Actors Circus Division which is involved in this wage dispute with the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc., and which is affiliated with the great American Federation of Labor, prizes above anything else the sanctity of written agreements. Since the original basic agreement was made on May 31, 1937, the circus management has repeatedly violated this and other subsequent agreements which precipitated the present dispute. Every effort was made long before the circus arrived in Scranton to avoid a break, but the present lockout by the management was caused by Mr. John Ringling North posting a notice arbitrarily to the effect that all employees, (Continued on page 5)

North Tried to Break Union, Men, But Failed

AFA Taking Action

By EDWARD HARRISON

John Ringling North's repeated breaches of the five-year closed shop agreement of the Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey circus with the American Federation of Actors culminated last month in Scranton in a lockout of all employees for refusing to take a 25 percent wage cut that violated their contracts, and the closing of the Big Show in midseason for the first time in circus history. Then North, president of the Ringling circus, who throughout the tour had tried in very way to break the union and the spirit of his men, sent twenty-one cars of the Ringling show from winter quarters to join the Barnes-Sells Floto circus, a subsidiary, further violating his contract with the AFA.

The AFA intends to unionize the Barnes show and to teach North that contracts are not scraps of paper. As an initial step, Executive Secretary Ralph Whitehead has arranged with Louis Hines, head of the A. F. of L. Organizing Department, for notice to be sent to all city central bodies and state federations of the American Federation of Labor that the Ringling and Barnes show are on the "Unfair List." This means that millions of union members and their families will not patronize those shows.

Charges of violation of the Wagner Act will be filed with the National Labor Relations Board against the Ringling Bros. show and the Barnes-Sells Floto circus, and compensation asked for discharged members of both shows.

Judge Padway, AFA counsel and also general counsel for the American Federation of Labor, who has already brought two suits for damages against the Ringling Circus in (Continued on page 6)

called Mr. Braathen on the telephone and asked him to come to Rockford to see him about all these matters. After looking over these papers Mr. Braathen told Mr. Turney that he would arrange to make a special appearance in all cases when we were traveling with the Barnes-Floto Circus. Mr. Braathen had all these cases dismissed because of defective service. The show never took to the road again so that the actions were never brought again.

After seeing the night performance of the Mix Circus Mr. Braathen drove to Joliet the next day to see Mr. Duval but it was out of the question to see him since for some reason or another he was busy with other legal matters that had arisen that day. Mr. Duval thereupon called Mr. Braathen the next day and gave him what information he needed.

The show was scheduled to play Racine, Wisconsin, on July 29th but the route was changed because of threatened labor troubles in Racine and Milwaukee was played on July 29, 30 and 31st and Rockford, Illinois on August 1st.

asked us to take the annual convention of the CFA in Madison with the Barnes-Floto Circus with the result the convention was held in Madison on July 31 and August 1 and 2.

We drove to La Crosse to see the Barnes Show in its initial stand in Wisconsin and Mr. John Ringling North. He was most happy to have the convention with the Barnes-Floto Show in Madison. The business was very light for the show in La Crosse and a blank in Portage. It had a very poor lot in Portage since it was very sandy and very difficult to get the wagons on and off the lot. It ran into its first labor troubles in Janesville, Wisconsin, a very strong labor city. The circus was greeted with pickets at the runs and a large number of pickets on the lot that night who blocked entrance to the show grounds. The show took the elephants off the lot to water them and broke the picket line.

Great gloom gripped the backyard of the circus. The performers feared this would be another Scranton and many were in tears. Remembering the severed air hoses in Toledo they were worried for

and would allow no food or supplies to be hauled to the lot. He was afraid we would have a terrible situation in Madison.

Following this conference we called former Congressman George J. Schneider of Appleton, Wisconsin and asked for a conference with him. He had for twenty years been a vice president of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and was a member of the Executive Board of the Wisconsin Federation of Labor. After the entire situation had been explained to Mr. Schneider he promised he would personally investigate the various facets of the problem and then take such steps as he thought were indicated. Respecting his integrity and confident an impartial examination of the facts would benefit both organized labor and the circus this was agreed to. Upon returning to Madison we conferred with Joseph Kohl, president of the Madison Industrial Council and Cedric Parker of the Madison Capital Times and a labor leader.

Then at last came the dawn. On July 29 the Madison *Capital Times* broke the following front page story:



RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BRILEY COMBINED CIRCUS—SCRANTON, PA.—JUNE 22-23-24-25-26-27-1938

Mr. Braathen had to obtain from the Secretary of State of Indiana a certified copy of the Articles of Incorporation since the circus was incorporated in the State of Indiana. Somehow or another the show did exhibit in La Crosse, Portage and Janesville, Wisconsin, without authority to do business in Wisconsin. Mr. Braathen was informed that unless the foreign corporation permit was obtained the circus would not be allowed to come into Wisconsin. That no doubt was pressure from the unions.

Then finally on July 27th Mr. Braathen received the certified copy of the articles of incorporation from the Secretary of State of Indiana and from Herb Duval he received the signed application for a foreign corporation permit and filed them with the corporation clerk for Wisconsin, paid the filing fee and obtained the foreign corporation permit.

Melvin D. Hildreth, the president of the CFA called us from Washington and

The circus remained on the Scranton lot for nearly a week before being packed up for the trip back to Sarasota. A small plane crashed on the lot during the stay. This overall lot scene was taken by Edward J. Kelty. Pfening Collection.

fear that their props and rigging might be tampered with or some sabotage be resorted to by labor representatives whom the circus folk knew were not conversant with the true facts.

The newspapers in Janesville were filled with ads seeking to persuade people to boycott the circus. The show countered with ads of its own explaining that the various departments of the circus were affiliated with unions.

Then more trouble developed in Madison. Mayor James R. Law conferred with us and asked us to cancel the CFA convention and to keep the circus out of Madison. He said the unions were not going to let the show unload in Madison

NO PICKETING OF CIRCUS IN MADISON INDICATION ACTION WILL BE LEFT TO ACTOR'S UNION, IS DECISION

There will be no picketing of the Al. G. Barnes Circus when it shows in Madison next Tuesday, it was indicated here today in statements issued by Joseph Kohl, president of the Madison Industrial Council.

Both the AFL and the CIO unions will maintain a "hands off" attitude toward the circus, unless the union members connected with the show request action, Kohl and Parker said. "We have been assured by representatives of the Circus Fans Association in Madison that the majority of the workers in the Barnes Circus are members of the Union," Parker said. "This has been verified also by communication with the CIO representatives in Milwaukee who have investigated the situation fully.

"We also have received information that the union members with the Barnes Circus are opposed to picketing of the show, because they fear such agitation may force the circus to cancel all future engagements, thereby throwing them out of work. The Madison CIO has no desire to carry on picketing or other boycott action against the wishes of the union members involved, even though there are non-union performers with some of the troupes. For these reasons the Madison CIO will refrain from picket action."

Mayor Law was not the only one to rejoice when this news broke!

Dawn of August 2 gave promise of a day to delight circus owners, performers, populace, — bright and clear. Hundreds were at the runs to watch the unloading in the predawn light. Madisonians recognized many members of local labor unions among the onlookers, quite as fascinated by the pageant that was the unloading of a big circus as were the dyed-in-the-wool circus fans. There were no demonstrations either at the runs or on the lot, and the circus played to an excellent afternoon house and a capacity house that evening. Madison circus goers had long been cherished by circus artists as receptive, responsive, appreciating audiences. Never were they more welcome than on that fateful day of August 2, 1938. Never did performers give more of themselves than they did during those two performances.

We wrote Ralph Whitehead a long letter in Scranton, and he did reply to the letter. Within an hour after Braathen's secretary had mailed that letter both Madison newspapers called and wanted to know what was in that letter. They were told that Mr. Whitehead would have to release the contents of the letter. We never learned how they got this information.

Those conversant with the serious situation which had prevailed since those days in Scranton, Pennsylvania were happy to note the relief mirrored in the faces of everyone present on that occasion. Roland Butler, gifted circus artist and versatile press agent, purchased a hundred or more copies of the *Capital Times* to use along the route. Never did he or the circus invest money more wisely, for the news items and editorials proved most persuasive with both city and union officials the balance of that season. There were no more incidents.

The Barnes-Floto Circus was not to wholly escape misfortune that day in Madison. The Circus Fans gave a banquet for many of the executive staff and performing personnel after the night show. After the banquet we took several of the circus people to the runs in our car only to find that the show was under edict of the coroner not to move the trains until the mystery surrounding the death of a negro on the lot had been solved. When we arrived at the runs



The inside of the big top looked just as it did between shows during the waiting period in Scranton. Robert Good Photo.

Mr. Braathen asked Henry Ringling "Buddy" North, Herb Duvall and the doctor where the body was as well as the coroner. They got into our car and directed us to the funeral parlor. After arguing to no avail with "Ace" Fischer, the coroner, Mr. Braathen called Norris Maloney, the district attorney and explained the situation to him. Mr. Maloney is one of the most brilliant attorneys and presently a circuit judge that we have ever had in Madison. After explaining the situation to him he asked Mr. Braathen to put "Ace" Fischer on the telephone and Mr. Maloney told him to let the circus go and he could make his investigation in Fond du Lac the following day. We then took our guests back to the runs but when we got there and train had pulled out.

After the "Ringling-Barnum Features" were added to the Barnes show the actors union distributed this handbill to people coming to the showgrounds in a number of cities. Pfening Collection.

Al. G. Barnes
and
Sells Floto Circus

UNFAIR

to
Organized Labor

American Federation of Actors

Affiliated with
A. F. of L.

We drove the car to the first crossing and the doctor said he would catch the train and stop it. We fully expected he would have been crushed between the train and a bridge just a few feet from the crossing. We then drove our guests to another crossing and the train had stopped. "Buddy" North was the only one that caught the train before it began moving again and Mr. Duval and another man from the circus had to walk the tracks about two miles to the runs to ride the second section. So ended not alone a hectic day but a period of several weeks when it was touch and go as to whether the circus could survive the season.

The show was routed into Breckenridge, Minnesota, for a matinee only on Sunday August 14. Wahpeton, North Dakota, is just across the Red River from Breckenridge. Since Roland Butler was on press in Breckenridge we told him that when the Ringling show was setting up in Wahpeton on June 10, 1897, lightning struck a center pole and killed C. E. Walters and Charles Smith and wounded twenty others. The two who were killed are buried in Wahpeton and there is a replica of the splintered center pole as a monument at their graves. We suggested to Mr. Butler he should put a little religion in the circus when it got to Breckenridge and have memorial services at these graves with a minister and Merle Evans and his band. He followed our suggestions and put stories in the Fargo, North Dakota, papers and the Wahpeton, Breckenridge and other papers and the show played to a big straw house.

When the show got to Appleton Mr. Duval said "You had better go to the office wagon and get what money you had coming. The show is more than \$200,000 in the red and no one knows when it may fold. Mr. Braathen never accepted fees for services from circuses. Mr. Forstall wrote us about this as follows: "Your figure of being \$200,000 in the red by the time we got to Appleton might be right, but don't forget that included a lot of expenses that the Ringling show piled up railroading itself back to Fla. and then shipping out to Redfield, also the billing they blew in changing the route. . ." With the exception of Madison and Milwaukee the show had lost money in all cities since

the merger with the Ringling show in Redfield. At Duluth the business picked up and continued good for the balance of the season. It went into winterquarters free of debt but never again to take to the sawdust trail.

Careful study has revealed that John Ringling North was justified in asking everyone on the Ringling-Barnum Combine to accept a twenty-five per cent reduction in wages and salaries early in 1938. The Roosevelt administration was still struggling to find economic and political devices to stabilize the economy that had tottered on the brink of some 'ism in 1932-1933. The near fatal blow to our way of life was not easily rectified. Circus managers along with thousands of other business men had foreseen rough sledding ahead in 1938 and the wise among them sought to cut their coat to fit the cloth available.

It was a colossal blunder for Ralph Whitehead to insist on a five year contract covering all employees of the Ringling-Barnum Circus. The divisions of that show which could be reasonably organized into labor unions had been affiliated with one or another of the trade, craft or professional unions before Mr. Whitehead cast his hungry eyes circusward. To consider unionizing the workmen on any circus was sheer stupidity. These men were wanderers, traveling with the circus only as long as to do so suited some purpose of their own. They fitted into no fixed social pattern and for the most part desired no attachment to any economic group. True it was that there were many who gave loyal service year after year, but the average period was nine days. Mr. Whitehead had been apprised of this fact. To ask any circus to accept the responsibility for supervising the collection of union dues from so nomadic a group and meeting other conditions incident to their union membership was folly.

That those circus owners who embarked on tours in 1938 had trepidation were quite justified in their fears is amply evidenced by their fate that season.

One of the most honest, upright and shrewd circus owners at that time was Charles Sparks. He took out Downie Bros., a large and outstanding truck show. Poor business forced it to fold on May 3.

The movie cowboy, Tim McCoy, had proven an excellent attraction on the Greatest Show on Earth and was bitten by the ownership bug. The so-called Wild West show appealed most strongly to him. Whereas circuses proper used tents whose tops covered the entire area between their sidewalls, wild west shows utilized a tent so constructed that only the seats were canopied and the entire oval between these was left open to the sky. It was in this uncovered area the performance was given. This, too, differed from that of the traditional circus. The Wild West show consisted of feats of horsemanship, lassoing and roping feats



Alex Neuberger, husband of wire walker Nio Naitto is shown standing on a wagon holding a petition signed by a large number of performers agreeing to a 25% reduction in wages. Braathen Collection.

of cowboys, and the re-enactment (in varying degrees of authenticity) of life on the American frontier with Indian raids, stagecoach holdups, et cetera. It was an accepted custom that circuses might expect to find business in any section of this country but that the wild west show must go east if it would attract crowds.

Backed by some "angels" Tim McCoy built a beautifully equipped show with a good performance and an excellent thirty-two piece band, the largest since before World War I. It opened the season in Chicago at the international Amphitheater on April 14, played seven cities on its trek east, and on May 4 at the end of a three day stand in Washington, D.C. bowed to the fate of too many other business enterprises that fateful 1938. It was sold at a sheriff's sale. It is interesting to note that the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show also went broke and was stranded in Washington a few years earlier.

The three Lindemann brothers of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, had built their Seils-Sterling Circus from a midget affair to a big truck show. Such was its reputation that it could play a hundred days or more in Wisconsin alone every season. The brothers were good business men with several years of circus experience. They never permitted grifters or grafters with

their show. In 1938 business began poorly. As the season progressed the Lindemanns lowered their admission price, hoping to keep their organization intact until better days should come. But those aftermath days of the Great Depression found people replacing exhausted supplies and paying old debts. Circus attendance must wait. On July 4 at Iron Mountain, Michigan the Lindemanns were compelled to yield to poor business. They sold their equipment and never returned to the sawdust trail with a circus of their own.

Russell Bros. Circus, a large and well established truck show owned by Pauline and Claude Webb was on tour in 1938. When they played Savannah and Sterling, Illinois several performers from various circuses that had folded or were unable to meet payrolls applied to the Webbs for work. So desperate was the plight of most of these circus folk that they asked no salary, — pleaded with tears in their eyes only for gasoline for their cars and trailers and the privilege of eating in the cookhouse. Mrs. Webb remarked that she was greatly concerned when the Ringling-Barnum Circus went into winterquarters in June. "I tell you that Ringling Show is the sheet anchor of the circus business in this country. When they began to have trouble Claude and I both remarked that we feared when the news got around it would have a bad effect on all of us and it has."

When the working crews tore down and loaded the Cole Bros. Circus in Bloomington, Illinois the night of August 3 they had no idea they were "wrapping her up for the barns." As the performers tramped back to their sleeping cars on the train they speculated as to how much longer the management would be able to hold out in the face of the consistently poor business. Most of them thought they would have to close in September. They had had few pay days, for the show needed such cash as they took in to feed their personnel and animals and pay transportation costs. When the workmen and performers alighted from their coaches on August 4 they were stunned to discover they were back in Rochester, Indiana, — their winterquarters. The season had been so disastrous the operating company went into bankruptcy. The circus had to be reorganized before it could again take to the road.

All over our nation that year circuses were forced to either fold or to greatly curtail their season. In later years Zack Terrell, owner of the Cole Bros. Circus, commented that 1938 was the worst season he had ever tramped, — bad weather, poor business and general uncertainty as to the future of the American circus. He was quick to grant that the Ringling-Barnum Circus was the sheet anchor of circusedom on this continent. As we have seen, when the Greatest Show on Earth returned to quarters in June that year every circus in this country felt the results, some in catastrophic form.

WILD ANIMAL TRAINER LITHOS

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.



In our continuing series of pictorial displays of circus lithographs we are pleased to show this interesting group of posters depicting wild animal trainers with circuses. Many of the trainers shown here are identified in the other article in this issue "Masters of the Steel Arena."

Around 1840 Isaac A. Van Amburgh was shown on a lithograph. It was typical of the period. An early poster located was a fine Strobridge bill used by the Barnum and London Circus in 1880. The original is in the Harold Dunn Collection in Sarasota, Florida. This poster was located following completion of the article in which it was stated that no record could be found of a wild animal "trainer" or "tamer" on the Barnum show. According to the poster the show had five individuals who went inside the dens, ala Van Amburgh. Listed on the litho are Theo Ferris with a group of lions, Mlle. Alice Sill with leopards, Charles Lannahan with hyenas, Madam McDonald with panthers and Alfred Sill with tigers. So it is clear that the P. T. Barnum Greatest Show on Earth and the Great London Circus did present wild animal tamers.

In 1915 the Barnum & Bailey show presented a trained wild animal act featuring Mlle Adgie with lions. Again the Strobridge firm designed a colorful poster to advertise the act. This same year that show used a parade bill showing a "tamer" in the cage with tigers dressed in a Roman outfit, much like that used by Van Amburgh. This litho is reproduced to show the manner in which the wild animal acts were pre-

sented prior to 1891. Both of these posters are also from Harold Dunn's Collection.

When the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows began using big cage acts in 1921 the Strobridge Company was again called upon to design a number of fine bills. A number of these are shown here. In only one case was the name of a trainer used on the poster and that was in 1923 for the Mable Stark act.

It is interesting to note that Ringling-Barnum did not mention the names of any of the other eight or ten trainers with the show during the 1921 to 1924

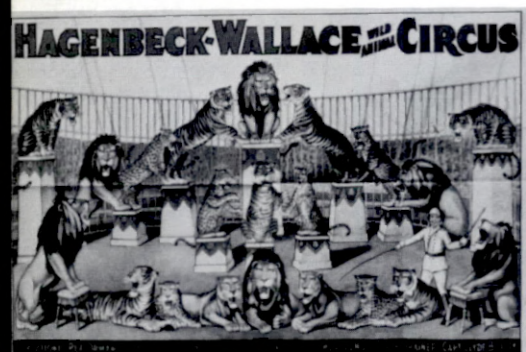


seasons. The years are noted on each litho. All of the Ringling-Barnum posters of the early 1920s are also from Harold Dunn.



In the 1920s the various shows owned by the American Circus Corporation also used lithos from Strobridge. Two of the finest are shown here from the Hagenbeck-Wallace show. Both were used in 1922, for sure, and perhaps in other years. John Helliott and Dolly Castle were both on the show in 1922.

The Hagenbeck show also used special paper for other trainers in the 1920s. Bobby McPhearson was featured in a poster printed by Erie Litho for the 1923



season. In 1926 this show used its first poster advertising Capt. Clyde Beatty, who was shown in a jungle helmet with a mixed group of cats. In the 1930s Hagenbeck-Wallace used a number of designs for Beatty. The vertical bill showing Beatty with a stick facing a rearing lion is well known. This basic design has been in newspaper ads on many circuses, the last time on Cristiani Bros. in 1958. Around 1930 Erie designed a new poster of Beatty #14-1755 with the caption "40 ferocious brutes that breathe", this bill was used with the Ringling-Barnum title during Beatty's Madison Square Garden dates in the early 1930s. Around 1932 Erie made up another bill titled "Capt. Beatty 40 ferocious kings of the jungle", this too was retitled for R-B, one of the few times a litho carried only Ringling Barnum rather than Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. This same poster was revived by R-B in 1938 with Terrell Jacob's name in place of Beatty.

Two special bills were made up by Erie for the 1935 Hagenbeck-Wallace Forepaugh-Sells Circus, advertising Bert Nelson. The vertical poster shows Nelson in the center of lion heads. It was rehased in 1936 for Nelson's tour with the Al G. Barnes Circus. The horizontal bill showed three drawings of Nelson. The illustration shown here is a drawing of the design from the files of the Circus World Museum, as it was rehased for the Barnes show. The vertical bill was also reworked for Barnes in 1936. Another colorful poster was used in 1935 on Hagenbeck showing Mlle. Rasputin. In 1938 two different styles of paper were made up by Erie showing Blacaman with lions.

The Al G. Barnes-Sells-Flote Circus used a new vertical design of Nelson with a tiger head in 1937. Early in the 1930s that show had used a fine horizontal poster of Terrell Jacobs with eight lions sitting in a row. During the 1920s the Central Printing & Illinois Litho Co. did a fine bill of Mable Stark, one of the few carrying the artists name, Frank Hoban. This Central bill was titled "The Fearless Mable Stark", while a rehase of this bill done Erie was titled "Miss Mable Stark" and did not have the detail of the Central poster. A new design of Mable Stark was used in 1937.

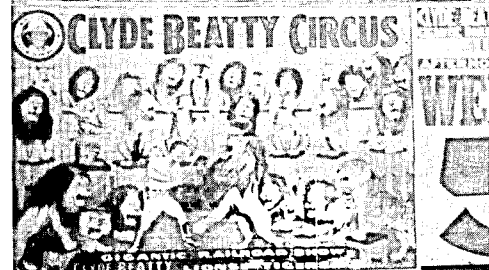
The Sells-Floto Circus probably used some trainer bills, but we could locate only a proposed 1929 drawing of Peter Taylor. This Erie drawing may never have been used. The drawing is from the Circus World Museum. Sells-Floto did use stock wild animal trainer bills.

The Sparks Circus used a poster to advertise its trainer Franz Woska, however his name was misspelled as "Walski", another Sparks poster showed a lady with spotted leopards and carried the name Olga Watrus.

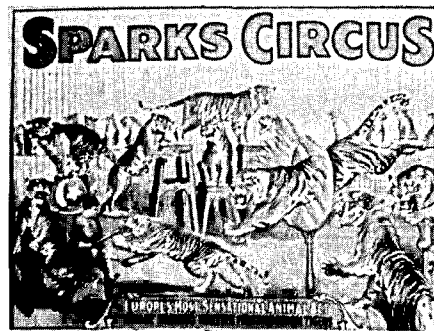
Clyde Beatty was advertised on more different posters than any other trainer. We have mentioned the Ringling-Barnum



and Hagenbeck-Wallace. In 1935 the new Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus commissioned Erie to do many new posters, among them were three different styles of Beatty. Two horizontal bills and one vertical were made up for the first season. A third horizontal new design was done of Allen King. This poster was pasted over with Beatty's name after King left the show early in the season. In 1937 a new vertical bill was drawn by Erie showing Mrs. Clyde Beatty with a lion and tiger riding an elephant. One of the 1935 Erie Beatty bills was retitled for the Hamid-Morton Circus in 1940. This same poster was used by the Clyde Beatty railroad circus in the late 1940s. Around 1948 Forest Freeland made up three new posters of the Beatty show. A horizontal shows Beatty facing a tiger with other tigers and lions in the background. A vertical was a rehase of the



1934 H-W Beatty poster of him with a stick facing a rearing lion, a second Freeland vertical show Harriet Beatty with a tiger leaping to an elephants back. The Beatty truck show around 1960 used a new design made up by the Enquire Co. This firm later designed a bill for the Beatty-Cole show with the word circus in the middle of the drawing. Still another design of Beatty with a full group was used by the Beatty rail show, it



carried a photo of Beatty in the upper left hand corner.

The Ringling-Barnum Circus used a Strobridge bill of Terrell Jacobs that was new in 1939, it differed from the rehash of the Beatty bill used with Jacobs name in 1938. This poster was pasted over with Alfred Court's name in 1940. Another special poster was made up in 1938 featuring the Jacobs black leopard group. A special poster was made up for Court in 1941, showing the trainer with a leopard around his neck. In 1945 a colorful litho was printed showing the panther and leopard group with six girls.

Not too many truck shows used special posters with trainer's names. The Seils-Sterling Circus used two styles printed by the Central Show Print of Mason City, Iowa. One was a photo of eight cats with "Joe J. Nelson, the man of a thousand scars", another showed Capt. Ervin Klauder. Seils-Sterling used a third trainer bill that did not carry a name.

The Ervin Klauder poster was pasted over with John Helliot's name and Dailey Bros. and was used by that show in 1945. Helliot was not with the show, but Eddie Kuhn was.

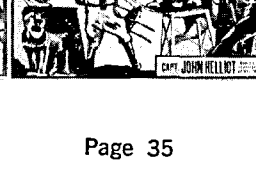
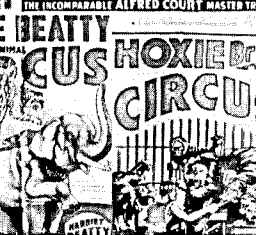
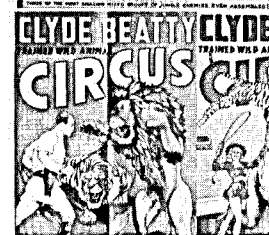
The Enquire firm made up a new design for the Kelly-Miller show in 1960 showing a lady trainer with leopards, it carried no name. In 1944 Wallace Bros. used a poster to advertise Captain Engerer. This poster design was used by Terrell Jacobs also.

The latest new poster design was first used by Hoxie Bros. in 1969 or 1970 showing Prince Bogino (Junior Ruffin), it looks very much like a Forest Freeland drawing.

There is no question that many of the circuses we have mentioned as well as other shows used posters with trainer's names that are not shown here.

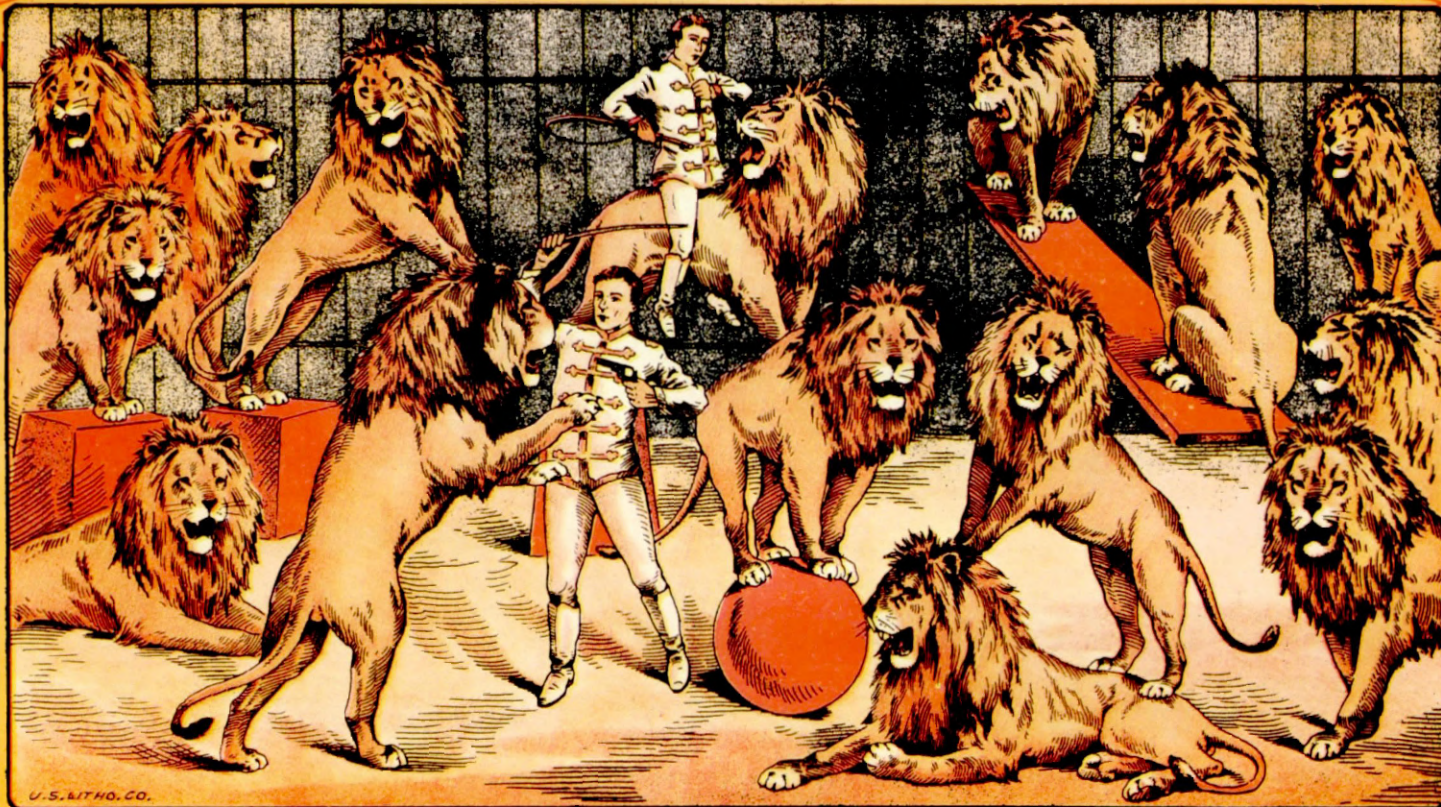
Stock and special wild animal trainer lithographs were used by just about every circus that toured. Many of these had steel arena acts, but did not mention the trainer's name on the bills.

Thanks go to the Circus World Museum and Harold Dunn for allowing posters from their collections to be used here. Others are from the author's collection.



JONES BROS. & WILSON'S

BIG THREE RING WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS



U.S. LITHO. CO.

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